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Eggar and Straw condemn teachers

NUT isolated by vote for one-day strikes

By DAVID TYTLER, EDUCATION EDITOR

BRITAIN'S biggest teachers' union voted yesterday to ballot its members on strike action in its campaign to restore negotiating rights abolished by the government in 1987. Delegates at the National Union of Teachers' annual conference in Scarborough voted for one-day strikes "and more extensive action to begin at an earlier possible date". The strikes would have to be sanctioned by the membership.



talks with John Major and leaders of the other main parties. Members will be balloted on strike action shortly, and Doug McAvoy, the union's general secretary, believed they would vote in favour.

Stephen Byers of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, but speaking on behalf of all local education authorities in England and Wales, said the local authorities supported the campaign to restore negotiating rights but were opposed to industrial action. He said: "Strike action which would result in children being sent home and their education disrupted will clearly reduce public support for teachers rather than increase it."

Jack Straw, Labour's education spokesman, said: "Strike action would be quite wrong. It would hit children and play into the hands of the government." However, he accused the government of "deliberately fabricating" reasons for the delay in the bill. The greatest criticism was reserved for the decision to boycott testing of seven-year-olds. Mr Straw said the decision, taken against the advice of the union's executive, was indefensible. Mr Byers said legal guidance would be issued to all

local authorities and school governors, pointing out that schools, with teachers, had a legal obligation to carry out the tests. "The decision was totally irresponsible," Mr Byers said. "The NUT now stands isolated in the world of education." He said teachers were contractually bound to carry out the tests if so instructed by their headteacher. A refusal would be a breach of contract, and he believed teachers would lose pay if they boycotted the tests and could even face dismissal.

David Hart, general secretary of the Association of Head Teachers, which represents most primary heads and deputies, said: "I am appalled by the decision. It will lose any sympathy from parents and is a gift to the government."

Mr Eggar said he deplored the decision. "It is unfair to parents, to children and to the vast majority of teachers who have worked very hard to introduce the national curriculum including assessment and testing."

Mr McAvoy said he expected a ballot on the issue and that it might also be necessary to levy all members to support any teachers who were dismissed or lost pay.

The main teaching unions oppose the present form of tests, which they claim are unwieldy and unworkable. It is not clear how many teachers will refuse to carry out the tests but there is likely to be disruption in many schools in inner London and the big provincial cities, where there are pockets of militant teachers.

Negotiations are complicated by the fact that the 400,000 teachers in 20,000 primary and 4,000 secondary schools are represented by six different organisations. The National Union of Teachers estimates that it represents about 40 per cent of the total workforce, but about 60 per cent of all primary teachers.

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CND plan for Gulf service criticised

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

A SENIOR churchman and a politician have attacked plans by CND to hold an "alternative" Gulf War remembrance service on the same day as the official thanksgiving service in Glasgow cathedral. Members of CND will meet this week to decide what form their event will take, but it is certain to involve different faiths and be near the VIP service on May 4.

Michael Mates, chairman of the defence select committee, said: "CND as usual are out of touch with the mood of the people. They will not in any way take away from a day of thanksgiving in which we shall regret having to go to war but be proud of the way in which our troops did."

"That is the object of the exercise, which is why the Queen, the prime minister, the government will be there and why it is right to give thanks for the fact that we lost

so few. They won't embarrass the government, they will embarrass themselves."

CND's plans were disclosed by Marjorie Thompson, their chairman, on BBC Radio 4's Sunday programme. She said: "Continued on page 18, col 4"

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Thompson: service must acknowledge Iraqi losses



On guard: a young Kurdish woman fighter patrolling an area near Salaheddin

Kurds plead for help and warn of Saddam deal

From MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

KURDISH rebels warned yesterday that unless they receive immediate help from the United States, they may be forced into brokering a deal with President Saddam Hussein that could ensure he remained in power for years to come.

Safwan Dizayee, a spokesman for the Kurdish Democratic Party, said: "We will have no choice. We will have to take Saddam's offer seriously to save four million (Kurdish) lives."

"We will warn the United States that if we are forced into this deal, we will keep it like loyal Iraqis, and that could ensure Saddam remains in power," he said.

The warning came as a rump of Kurdish fighters cut off from their supply lines and comrades to the north were battling for their lives at the centre of the northern oil town of Kirkuk against government forces they said outnumbered them by ten to one.

In a flanking movement, thousands of heavily-armed Republican Guards swung north to sever the road from Kirkuk to Erbil, according to Mr Dizayee. Erbil, and another Kurdish stronghold, Dohuk, were also under heavy attack from government forces that were using helicopter gunships, multi-barrelled rocket launchers, and Scud missiles, Mr Dizayee

said. "The greatest danger is to the civilians. We don't have a casualty figure, but thousands have died," he said. Hundreds of thousands of Kurdish civilians fled cities, towns and villages to the Turkish and Iranian borders at the weekend as opposition leaders urged the United States to intervene to prevent a massacre.

Mr Dizayee said government helicopter gunships had attacked long convoys of civilians fleeing from Kirkuk to Erbil and Sulimaniyah.

If help from the United States does not come within days, the Kurds may accept an offer for autonomy from Saddam Hussein, much as they despise and distrust him. "We will have no choice," Mr Dizayee said.

Saddam renewed the offer of a negotiated settlement last week based on an autonomy arrangement which first drawn up 20 years ago but never honoured. The Kurds would insist the settlement be struck under United Nations auspices, whose troops they want to supervise the agreement.

The Bush administration had no immediate comment about the Kurds' warning, but a White House official said that the reported weakness in the position of the rebels would leave United States policy unchanged.

● BAGHDAD: Government officials took foreign reporters under an escort of officials from the Iraqi Ministry of Information on a tour of Kirkuk yesterday to demonstrate that it was under their control. (AFP)

Plane crash kills two

By A STAFF REPORTER

TWO people died last night when their Tomahawk training aircraft crashed on a runway and burst into flames.

The accident happened at Coventry airport, close to control tower, but no one else was hurt. There was no damage to ground installations.

Warwickshire police said that it was not yet known if the

plane had been taking off or was attempting to land.

A spokesman said the plane burst into flames immediately after the accident. He could not give the sex of the victims but said that it was hoped that they would be identified later last night.

Warwickshire police said that it was not yet known if the

Albania limps out of the Balkan gulag

As Albanians vote in their first free elections dissidents tortured by the communist regime are savouring a quiet triumph, John Holland reports

He walked with a slight limp as he entered Polling Station 218 yesterday to vote in Albania's first free elections. A white shirt and blue sweater hid the faded welts in his back from the torture he endured and hid also the scar on his left wrist from a failed suicide attempt in prison.

For Alfred Berisha, a 33-year-old political prisoner released two weeks ago after serving two years of a 15-year sentence for agitation against the socialist People's Republic of Albania, it was a moment of quiet triumph for a quiet man. "In my heart I hope that finally this scourge of communism will be wiped away from Albania forever," he said after casting his ballot.

Mr Berisha is one of thousands of Albanians who have suffered silently — some of them have died — in the prison camps of the Hoxha and Alia regimes for speaking their mind.

Their suffering has helped to bring about the democratic changes which have begun to transform this tiny, isolated Balkan nation.

Twice denied entry to university in the early eighties because he lacked a party card and the "right" connections, Mr Berisha got a job at a military typographers office in Tirana in 1986.

"During those years so much hate accumulated in my heart about the injustices in social and political life here," he said in an interview conducted in his apartment in a quiet Tirana neighbourhood where Mother Theresa lives several houses down the street. "I hated the Party of Labour and wanted to do something about it," he said.

On January 8, 1988, he tried to do just that. Together with another colleague at the typographers office he formed the impressive-sounding Committee for the Defence of Albanian people's rights — membership two.

Working at night to avoid detection on a typewriter and the office's copying machine (both illegal without prior registration under Mr Alia's regime) he and a friend (they were later joined by a third) printed up and

distributed 5,000 copies of their political manifesto. Over the following fortnight the trio broke into several middle schools in Tirana in the middle of the night, leaving their handwork on desks and chairs.

They also threw leaflets over a barbed wire fence into the yard of the ministry of education — the same ministry which had denied Mr Berisha's application for entry to university, telling him to "try again next year".

The leaflet called for a general rally in front of central committee headquarters in Tirana on March 18, 1988. But on March 10 his two friends were arrested in the northern city of Shkoder while attempting to distribute the leaflets.

Hours later, dozens of special police from the feared Sigurimi broke down his door, put a gun to his head and took him directly to the ministry of the interior, where Mr Berisha said he was personally interrogated by Zylyftar Ramizi, the (still) deputy minister, for two hours in Mr Ramizi's office.

"This night your family (wife and five-year-old child) will be deported to the remotest corner of Albania Mr Berisha quoted the minister as telling him.

Then he was taken away to Tirana prison where he said he was tortured "in the most unimaginable ways" over the next five months. He pulled up his shirt and pointed to several faded welts on his back.

The torturers tried to prise out the names of other members of Mr Berisha's "committee". His wife Vjollca, and five-year-old son Xhuljken, sat nearby, Vjollca wincing.

On August 10 1988 he received a 17-year sentence for agitation against the state and government and for attempting to flee the country. He was sent to the infamous hard labour camp at Fushë Arretë in the north where he was forced to work in the iron mines under in conditions comparable to Solzhenitsyn's gulag. Terror Continued on page 18, col 6

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ADVERTISEMENT

DARK HINTS OF NEW ALLIANCE
SAYS REPORTER IN STOREY

UPROAR IN THE HOUSE AS ANTI-EURO BATTLE PROVOKES WALK OUT.

I WITNESSED A dramatic scene in the House of Commons last night as Sir Percy Stent-Lanching, Member for Great Cookham, stormed out of the chamber.

Sir Percy had been speaking on behalf of his Bill to ensure that only English Mustard should be available in the member's dining room. "Here in the mother of all parliaments," he thundered, "there can be seen the pernicious influence of

Sir Percy stood his ground. "If the Members of this House will do nothing to preserve traditional English values," he said with conviction, "there are those that will!" With this he marched out of the chamber.

Sir Percy at Bay I connected Sir Percy later in the dining room. "Thought this was where I'd find you," I said. "Any port in a storm," he muttered. "Even the one they serve here!" I probed him.

"Who are these people you referred to in the House?" I asked. "Just let me say there are those who have a taste for the English way of life," he replied darkly. When I suggested he was a leading member of this mysterious group, he turned his attention to the Britton and tucked a mackerel into his neckband. But I saw he was covering up his tie with the letters "PTM" woven on it.

I hope to reveal its mysterious meaning as I initiate the meetings of Sir Percy and his friends and lift the lid on their activities.



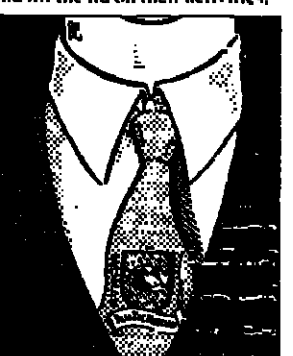
Cause of hot words in the House last night.

the Euro lobby. It may be just pots of French moutarde today, but it could be Sauce à la Pommes Frites tomorrow! What would honourable members say if the waiter offered them frog's legs for lunch?

"I'd tell him to hop it!" shouted an Opposition Member from the back benches.

"Order! order!" called the Speaker as Sir Percy tried to continue.

"Steak and Kidney pie and a dollop of the yellow stuff!" shouted a humorous cross-bencher.



Secret picture of Sir Percy's tie. What does it mean? Ivor Storey reveals all!

ASTER MONDAY IN THE TIMES

INTERVIEW

George Hill talks to Martin Gilbert about his one volume life of Churchill, 40 years work distilled in 1,000 pages Page 14

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale becomes the death of good news in the West End, a Broadway odyssey which has now come to London Page 15

RACING

Mandarin (Michael Phillips) tips his way through today's Easter parade of 16 race meetings. It is the big football programme Pages 19-26

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ase alert Law Society is examining leasing contract that fooled solicitors and left innest landlords facing bitant rent rises... Page 3

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Hairdresser's application may aid spaceship

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER hairdresser from Hartlepool has developed a novel material that Nasa, the American space agency, is considering as a heat shield for shuttles and space ships. The material owes much to home-spun chemistry learnt over 20 years doing perms and dying hair in Middlesbrough.

Tests carried out at the Atomic Weapons Establishment, at Shoeburyness, Essex, indicate that the substance can withstand a simulated nuclear flash.

A human hand coated with the material remains cool and unscathed when subjected to the intense heat of a blowtorch. Eggs, similarly coated, stay uncooked after four minutes under the torch's 1,200C flame.

The material, called Ultra High Tech Starlite, has been devised by Maurice Ward, an inventor with an affection for bow-ties, who gave up hairdressing in 1976 after running a salon in Middlesbrough for 20 years and went on to found a plastics business making damp-proof membranes for buildings.

A few years ago, Mr Ward decided that there was a desperate need for a very light weight, fire-resistant material for protecting airliners and passengers in an accident, and Ultra High Tech Starlite was born.

Precise details of the substance are being kept secret until Mr Ward is fully protected by patents. Nevertheless, his invention has already attracted the interest of the defence ministry and of Nasa. Officials at the space agency's base at Huntsville, Alabama, have asked Mr Ward to

submit a detailed proposal on the material in return for development funding. They are keen to find an alternative to the shuttle's ceramic, thermal tiles, which tend to fall off.

Charles Martin, a retired former chief designer and assistant chief engineer with British Aerospace Space Systems, who was responsible for the company's role in America's Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), confirmed the interest of the space agency.

"A lot of people are interested in the material," Mr Martin said. "The tests at the Shoeburyness were done by the establishment people themselves. The material does seem to work, though goodness knows why."

Mr Martin said that the difficulty was that the interested parties were keen to analyse the remarkable material, adding: "He [Mr Ward] is in

trouble then because they will find out his secret, and I do not blame him for wanting to hang on to it."

The inventor himself is busy forming a marketing company for the material, for which he sees many potential applications. Rather like the shampoos with which he once worked, Ultra High Tech Starlite comes in a variety of formulations. Mr Ward has concocted one that, he believes, could be used to fight the Gulf oil-well fires far more cheaply than conventional techniques.

Traditional methods require huge volumes of water, scarce in the desert. Mr Ward has devised a formulation that, it is claimed, can be mixed with oil, turning the crude into an inflammable material that could itself be sprayed over surrounding areas to cool the sand and pipes.

Mixed emotions as Whitehall machine is broken into parts



Kemp: 'civil service had become top heavy'

By RICHARD FORD
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

AS THE government prepares the next stage of its drive to transform much of the civil service into semi-autonomous agencies, a survey has found Whitehall departments reluctant to relinquish central control.

Most civil servants, however, welcomed the move to agency status because smaller units meant better team spirit, clearer responsibility and flexibility in pay schemes and working arrangements, according to the survey by Price Waterhouse.

The findings also indicate, however, that there is still a civil service culture that does not see the customer as king, though there has been some improvement in management in the public services. Under the government's

Next Steps programme, big parts of the government machine are becoming executive agencies with the aim of delivering better services more efficiently. Headed by a chief executive officer, each agency has its aims and targets set out in a document with a review of its operations after three years. Ultimately, it is hoped that three-quarters of the civil service will switch to agency status leaving a small central core overseeing policy.

Peter Kemp, a second permanent secretary and project manager of the initiative, said the civil service was a large number of small businesses that needed to be run in their own right. It had been top-heavy with senior officials interested in providing what the civil service

wanted rather than what the people wanted.

During the past three years 34 agencies employing 80,000 civil servants have been established and this month a further 16 will be launched including the Benefits Agency, which, with 68,000 employees, is the biggest unit and will be responsible for delivering social security payments.

Others to be launched include the Passport Agency, Historic Scotland, and the Defence Research Agency, comprising the Admiralty Research Establishment, the Royal Aerospace Establishment, the Royal Armaments Research and Development Establishment and the Royal Signals and Radar Establishment. Most agencies are headed by former civil servants with only 11 chief

executives appointed from outside. Even then they tend to be drawn from the public sector. David Beeton, a former National Trust employee, is chief executive of Historic Royal Palaces, David Durham, a former NHS administrator is the head of Companies House, and the chief executive of the Benefits Agency is to be Michael Richard, former chief executive of Gloucestershire county council.

While each chief executive runs an agency according to objectives laid down by ministers, the relationships between the two and between the agency and the parent department have the potential for disagreement. Price Waterhouse's survey, in which there were replies from 22 of 31 established

agencies, found that almost all those questioned reported weekly contact with departmental officials and two or three chief executives said there was daily contact. A quarter of those who replied said they were in touch with departmental ministers on a weekly basis.

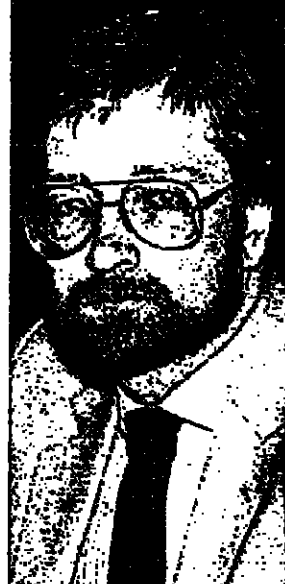
The authors of the survey said they were worried at the amount of time being spent in working out relations with the "parent" department. One agency complained that the biggest obstacle to providing a better service to its customer was the time spent on, and the cost of, activities required by the parent department "superimposed in the interests of departmental accountability and control".

Within Whitehall much attention is being focused on

working out the relationship between the parent department and the agency in the hope of avoiding conflict, preventing the department "second guessing" the agency, and providing the chief executive with the freedom to manage.

As one chief executive said in reply to the survey: "The issue of central control merits greater examination. Even where formal delegations exist, the enthusiasm of the centre for departmental policies or consistency requires constant vigilance if Next Steps is to be realised in practice."

Mr Kemp said that the right balance had yet to be found in the four-way relationship between the minister, the permanent secretary, chief executive and the Treasury.



Richard: new head of Benefits Agency

Parties gear up for test of strength in by-election

By RICHARD FORD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE government and opposition parties were yesterday preparing for a key test of their strength at a summer by-election whose result could determine the timing of the next general election.

The outcome of a poll in Monmouth, Gwent, where the Tories had a majority of 9,350 in 1987, has potentially far-reaching consequences for all three main parties in the run-up to a national poll. Its potential significance is much greater than that of the poll in Neath on Thursday, where Peter Hain, the anti-apartheid activist, is defending a 20,578 Labour majority.

With the latest opinion poll putting the Conservatives and Labour neck-and-neck on 40 per cent, a by-election in Monmouth, caused by the death last Friday of the sitting MP Sir John Stradling

Thomas, will present the government with a crucial test of its ability to turn public opinion round in its favour.

Meanwhile, the Conservative and Labour parties are making contingency plans for a possible June general election. In a surprise move, the Tory party has reappointed the advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi, widely blamed for difficulties in their 1987 campaign, for the forthcoming general election.

Labour is to intensify its political campaigning in case the prime minister decides on a June general election. With the theme The Better Way for Britain, Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader, and his senior shadow cabinet colleagues will undertake speeches, lectures and press conferences to highlight the party's policies.

The Conservatives were thought unlikely to rush the Monmouth by-election and call for a poll on the same day as local government elections on May 2. Although they selected a prospective candidate last December to replace Sir John, who was due to retire at the next general election, sources indicated that it would be in bad taste to hold a poll so soon after the MP's death.

Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats will be anxious to win the normally safe Tory seat where in the last general election Labour was in second place, 1,700 votes ahead of the then SDP/Alliance.

The Monmouth seat was last won by Labour in 1966. The local council has a substantial Conservative majority over Labour, with neither the Liberal Democrats or Plaid Cymru having a councillor. Sir John, aged 65, died in Westminster hospital on Friday. He had been MP for Monmouth since 1970.

The Conservative candidate is Roger Evans, a barrister, Labour has selected Huw Edwards, a lecturer at Brighton Polytechnic, and the Liberal Democrats' candidate is Frances David, a schoolteacher.

1987 General Election: Sir John Stradling (Tory) 23,387 (47.5 per cent), Katrina Gass (Lab) 13,037 (27.7 per cent), Clive Lindley (SDP/All) 11,313 (24 per cent), Sian Meredith (Plaid Cymru) 363 (0.8 per cent).

Control of NHS 'in slum state'

By OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SWEEPING changes are necessary to update the national health service, which is an "administrative slum" rooted in the 1940s, William Waldegrave, the health secretary, said yesterday.

Mr Waldegrave promised that the reforms introduced today would bring better-administered hospitals within 12 months and a health service more responsive to people's needs. On the eve of the introduction of the biggest shake-up in the NHS since its formation in 1948, he said that the changes would lead to decisions that had been avoided for decades being taken in several key areas.

"The NHS is an administrative slum designed in the 1940s and it needs to be updated," the minister said. "At the end of a year of reform on this scale, we will be right at the beginning, but we will be seeing better administration in the hospitals."

The present long waiting lists, Mr Waldegrave said, on BBC Radio 4's *The World This Week*, were a symptom of administration not using resources efficiently.

Letters, page 11



Game smiles: the anti-apartheid activist Peter Hain, Labour candidate in the Neath by-election, at Seven Sisters Rugby Football Club yesterday.

Ulster funerals obscure Easter Rising celebration

By EDWARD GORMAN, IRISH AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

IRELAND'S modest official celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising were obscured yesterday by the funerals of two teenage girls shot dead by Protestant paramilitaries last week.

As the Irish government commemorated the rising against British rule in a brief ceremony, in marked contrast to triumphalist celebrations on the 50th anniversary, thousands of mourners were saying their final farewells to the two girls and a man in his late twenties killed with them in Co Armagh last Thursday.

Father Thomas McGuinness, parish priest to Eileen Duffy, aged 19, her friend Katrina Rennie, aged 16, and Brian Frizzell, aged 29, told mourners attending requiem mass at St Anthony's church, Craigavon, that these were "beautiful young people".

He said he was not appealing to the terrorists. "I would rather appeal to the communities than to the violent people, the ordinary people who have such tremendous power if only they realised it. They can put an end to violence. I would ask them, the ordinary people, to speak out the men and women of violence."

Dr Francis Brooks, Bishop of Dromore, issued an appeal at the funeral to Sinn Féin to enter the mainstream of politics and turn away from violence. He said: "I call those who support Sinn Féin to urge them to call off their backing for the armed campaign, to resist pressures to have retaliation for this deed, and to

concentrate on building up a completely peaceful and political programme for attaining the ideals they aspire to."

The girls and Mr Frizzell were killed when a gunman from the outlawed Ulster Volunteer Force walked into a mobile grocery shop on a housing estate in Craigavon and shot them at pointblank range. Mr Frizzell tried to escape but fell down a slope near the van where his killer caught up with him and shot him several times.

The shootings, carried out in revenge for an IRA attack on a murdered policeman's widow in Londonderry 10 days ago, have shocked people throughout the British Isles and were recalled in Easter messages in scores of churches.

The Right Rev Robert Williamson, the Belfast-born Bishop of Bradford, described them as "the latest disgusting example" of evil that had afflicted Ireland over 20 years. "Evil men have besmirched the noble cause of freedom by perpetrating deplorable crimes against God and their fellow citizens," he said.

Police in Armagh were still questioning a number of men arrested on Friday in connection with the killings. They were also believed to be being interviewed about a loyalist attack outside a public house in Co Tyrone at the beginning of March in which four Catholic men were killed.

In Dublin concern that celebrations of the Easter Rising could play into the hands of the IRA lay behind a notably brief ceremony, which

annoyed republicans who accused the government of revisionism. Charles Haughey, the prime minister, said it was proper for the state to mark the rising, considered by historians to have provided the spark leading to the withdrawal of British forces from all but six of Ireland's 32 counties.

Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, speaking at a Co Tyrone commemoration, dismissed Dublin's approach as an attempt to try to erase the rising from Irish consciousness. He again dismissed inter-party talks achieved by Peter Brooke, the Northern Ireland secretary, from which Sinn Féin is excluded. They were based, he said, on a "Unionist singular agenda" and would lead back to a modified Stormont government in Belfast.

Mr Brooke's initiative will be considered by John Major and Mr Haughey next week when the two are to have talks at a European Community summit in Luxembourg on April 8.

Small farmers may lose planning perks

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

FULL planning control could be imposed on thousands of small farms under a proposal being considered by the environment department that would raise the minimum qualifying size for exemption from one acre to 25 acres.

Since the second world war farming has been spared the full rigours of planning law. A farmer can put up a building of any style, design or colour almost anywhere without permission provided that it is "reasonably necessary" for agriculture or forestry and covers less than 5,000 sq ft.

Under public pressure, the government proposed last October extending throughout the country the prior notification system applied in the National Parks, where farmers must give details of any building work to their local authority. The authority can object to the location, design or external appearance of any new or altered structure and stop the work going ahead.

That would still leave farmers in a privileged position, but would bring farm buildings under tighter planning supervision. Two months ago, an announcement by Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, putting prior notification into effect was said by his officials to be imminent. Now a decision is not expected before the summer.

Part of the reason for the delay is said to be the publication of a report commissioned by the department from a firm of consultants that endorses the plan to extend prior notification, but also says that a farm should be at least 25 acres to qualify for exemption from full planning control. The aim would be to reduce abuse of the system by people who are not genuine farmers. The government's proposal calls for the minimum size to be increased to 12 acres.

The National Farmers' Union (NFU) is worried that the proposal would burden struggling small farmers with extra costs and bureaucracy. At least 15,000 horticultural businesses are estimated to fall below the 12-acre threshold, and Giles Sturdy, chairman of the NFU's land use committee, said: "Many intensive pig units occupy less than 25 acres."

Mr Howard said he could not predict when unemployment would start to fall. A unemployment was an indicator which lagged behind change in the economy, he said that it was likely to continue rising for some months.

Police are hunting an armed gang who overpowered three elderly women at house in Chislehurst, Kent and escaped with valuable goods worth £200,000. Two of the gang posing as delivery men the other three in when a door was opened. They bound and gagged the maid and took both in their seventies, and neighbour aged 63. No one was injured except the maid who was punched on the nose.

London Weekend Television has issued a writ against Ferranti Creditphone claiming £76,666 and interest. £1,959 owed for a sponsor logo for Zonophone which appears on LWT weather maps. LWT contends that under a sponsorship agreement, it was to be paid £200,000 in 12 instalments but alleges there have been payments since October.

Julia Thompson, Broadmoor hospital nurse who sprayed air freshener in a patient's face, was ordered to be struck off the nursing register on Saturday. The others found guilty of treating patients were told they had come close to having their names removed from the register.

Eileen Gordon, a housewife has been selected to confront Labour at next general election. In Sir Michael Newbert has majority of 13,471 for Conservatives.

Recession has not confined to betting shops. On-course layers, who provide so much colour in racing, are finding it harder as racegoers think twice about paying high entry fees to courses. John Pegley, a leading race bookmaker, said: "The racecourse market has never been worse. I have got a living from it for the past 17 or 18 years, but I don't think there will be a living to be made there much longer. It is a case of too little money to go round."

The recession could not have come at a worse time for

Smoke from Kuwait turns snow black

By BILL FROST

SCIENTISTS from the Meteorological Office are this week expected to disclose more information on the chemical content of the smoke clouds blown 1,800 miles from the oil fires of Kuwait to the foothills of the Himalayas, where black snow has fallen.

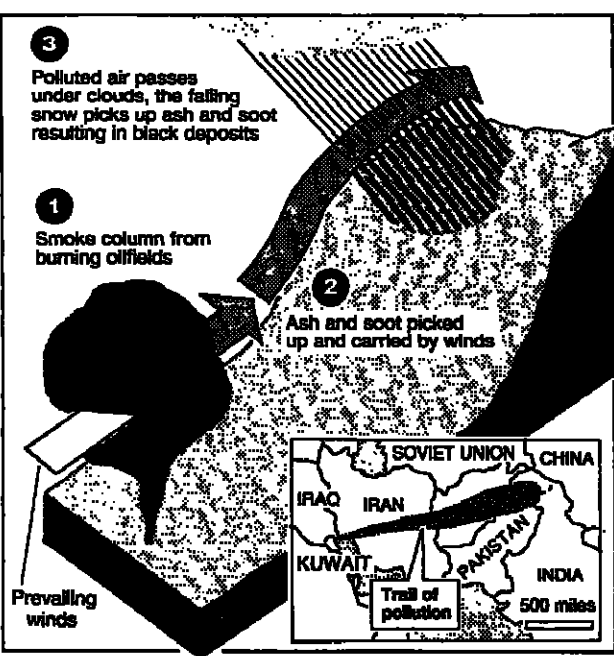
Soot, sulphuric acid and nitrogen oxides have been blown to Kashmir. Thick smoke clouds over Kuwait are being blown over Iran, Afghanistan, northern Pakistan and the Himalayas.

Dr Keith Browning, director of research at the Meteorological Office, said yesterday that pollution from the oil fires was moving east, and covering between 200 and 500 miles a day. A Meteorological Office team is observing the cloud at close quarters. Dr

Browning said he feared wind-borne pollution from the oil well fires in Kuwait could blight agricultural land in Iran, and other countries to the east of the Gulf. "It is possible this disaster could cause acid rainfall over a wide area, making parts of the region at least as dirty as some of the worst scenes of industrial pollution in eastern Europe."

Fears of more serious damage have been dismissed by the Meteorological Office team for the time being.

Buckingham Palace confirmed yesterday that the Prince of Wales is to co-host an environmentalists' summit later this month aboard Britannia, moored off the Brazilian coast during an official royal visit.



AGENDA

The week ahead

Today: New anti-litter law and food hygiene regulation come into effect.

Tomorrow: Equity picks new general secretary. Peter Lloyd, immigration minister, launches new UK passport agency.

Wednesday: Government launches scheme of grants for cathedral repairs. Royal College of Nursing celebrates 75th birthday. Master of the Bowbelle, goes on trial charged with failing to keep proper look-out before sinking of Marchioness in 1989.

Thursday: Neath by-election. Preparations for census unveiled.

Friday: National consume congress opens in Belfast. Scottish Liberal Democrats conference in Fifeochry.

Saturday: The Grand National, Aintree. The 75th anniversary of the Easter uprising celebrated in Dublin.

Sunday: Alpine Garden Society's international conference and show at Warwick.

Jobless rise 'will continue'

Unemployment is likely to go on rising for some months, Michael Howard, the employment secretary, said yesterday. Government figures later this month are expected to show that in March, for the first time since December 1988, unemployment rose above two million, even after seasonal adjustment. Unadjusted unemployment passed two million last month (Philip Bassett writes).

Mr Howard said he could not predict when unemployment would start to fall. A unemployment was an indicator which lagged behind change in the economy, he said that it was likely to continue rising for some months.

Attack by gang

Police are hunting an armed gang who overpowered three elderly women at house in Chislehurst, Kent and escaped with valuable goods worth £200,000. Two of the gang posing as delivery men the other three in when a door was opened. They bound and gagged the maid and took both in their seventies, and neighbour aged 63. No one was injured except the maid who was punched on the nose.

Logo cash claim

London Weekend Television has issued a writ against Ferranti Creditphone claiming £76,666 and interest. £1,959 owed for a sponsor logo for Zonophone which appears on LWT weather maps. LWT contends that under a sponsorship agreement, it was to be paid £200,000 in 12 instalments but alleges there have been payments since October.

Nurse struck off

Julia Thompson, Broadmoor hospital nurse who sprayed air freshener in a patient's face, was ordered to be struck off the nursing register on Saturday. The others found guilty of treating patients were told they had come close to having their names removed from the register.

Labour choice

Eileen Gordon, a housewife has been selected to confront Labour at next general election. In Sir Michael Newbert has majority of 13,471 for Conservatives.

Recession has not confined to betting shops. On-course layers, who provide so much colour in racing, are finding it harder as racegoers think twice about paying high entry fees to courses. John Pegley, a leading race bookmaker, said: "The racecourse market has never been worse. I have got a living from it for the past 17 or 18 years, but I don't think there will be a living to be made there much longer. It is a case of too little money to go round."

The recession could not have come at a worse time for

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A crippling rent rise for unwary business tenants is concealed in a cleverly-worded review clause

Solicitors alerted to hidden traps in cunning lease

JOHN Cox, a former Welsh Guardsman and coalminer, relished the thought of a comfortable livelihood beside the sea when he took over a fish restaurant with his wife Anita in north Devon in 1981. The former lance sergeant paid £135,000 for the lease and goodwill of the Blue Dolphin in Mill Street, Bideford, and agreed a £7,500-a-year rent in a business deal which reaped quick rewards.

The Law Society has told solicitors to be wary of a lease that has cost legal insurers at least £500,000. Michael Horsnell reports

legal practice of Cole & Cole of Oxford for their client, David Hilary Houghton, owner of Blue Dolphin (Fish Restaurants) Ltd, registered at Winchester, Hampshire.

The trick clauses in Mr Houghton's leases vary by only a few words from standard RPI leases, but the effect is to give Blue Dolphin the right to double rents at the first three-year review and to push them into six figure sums by the final review.

In a High Court document, it is alleged that Mr Houghton told one victim that the review clause was a "gold mine, that he had himself once been caught out by such a clause and that he... made his money by using the clause to force tenants to pay... to be allowed to surrender leases containing such a clause".

Mr Houghton, who has previously demonstrated expertise in exploiting the insurance market, often advises lessees to sue their lawyers for negligence to extricate them-

seives. Already, underwriters for solicitors who have approved the leases have paid out an estimated £500,000 to settle claims arising from the saga, which has been running for a decade. Several cases remain unresolved.

The Law Society has stepped in to alert solicitors, but has not directly contacted Cole & Cole, and Mr Houghton has continued to prosper. London Insurance Brokers, who organised the professional negligence cover for all solicitors at the time of Mr Cox's case, and Guardian Royal Exchange, then the insurers, kept negligence claims confidential.

However, both organisations agreed to let the Law Society examine sample copies of the Blue Dolphin leases to help it to draw attention to the dangers in them. Jonathan Goldsmith, the society's deputy head of communications, said: "There is nothing at all illegal about the Cole & Cole lease, but it is clever and has tripped up solicitors who were not being careful."

Mr Cox, who now runs a residential home for the elderly in Bideford, said: "I was devastated when Mr Houghton explained the implications of the rent review. But he told me what to do about it. He told me I should sue my solicitor. I went to my solicitors. I asked them to read the lease again and was told there



Down to earth: left to right, the Goddards and the Blackburns on a seafront bench at Ilfracombe, north Devon

Landlord's warning ends dream of new start in life

was nothing wrong. So I explained the position in the way it had been explained to me by Mr Houghton and my solicitor said "Oh". Then he called in a colleague and asked him to read the lease. The second colleague said he couldn't see anything wrong. He said: "It's a standard business lease". Then it was pointed out to the second colleague what was wrong and he said "Oh, my God!"

Through another solicitor, Jeremy Ferguson of Bideford, Mr Cox pursued his first solicitors and won an out-of-court settlement of £185,000 paid through London Insurance Brokers. However, having decided to continue running the shop, Mr Cox was tricked again when he signed an amendment to the original rent review clause which had been scrutinised by Mr Ferguson and counsel.

Mr Ferguson negotiated what he took to be a new standard rent review clause which seemed to put the rent on a normal RPI basis. But he was also fooled, the complex, arithmetic computation having the effect of escalating the rent to nearly £250,000 in the last three years of the lease. Mr Ferguson was persuaded by Mr Cox to challenge the new clause. He fought the case on the grounds that the clause was fundamentally flawed and contrary to public policy - a legal term based on the concept that the clause disclosed an impure motive and should not be enforced in the interests of justice.

Counsel advised Mr Cox to stop paying the rent on the grounds that the rent review clause was contrary to public policy and unenforceable. Mr Houghton promptly sued him for the rent. Mr Ferguson said: "The matter came before a High Court master in London on a summary judgment application, at which stage we

had not finalised Mr Cox's case to have the rent review clause declared unenforceable. Judgment went to Blue Dolphin. We then appealed."

Counsel for Mr Cox set out how the rent review clause was contrary to public policy. Following that, Mr Houghton indicated that he wanted to settle the action. While Mr Ferguson was considering this, however, Mr Houghton put bailiffs into the shop to recover the rent arrears. Mr Ferguson obtained a court order ejecting a nominee Mr Houghton had also put into the Blue Dolphin.

Finally, Mr Houghton withdrew his action for the rent, made a small payment for fixtures and fittings and signed a document acknowledging he had no further claim against Mr Cox. Mr Houghton, aged 50, was born in Ayrshire. His wife Diana is also a director of Blue Dolphin (Fish Restaurants) Ltd. They live in a country house overlooking Pinkneys Green, Berkshire.

Mr Houghton declined to comment. In 1988, he was interviewed by John Waite, presenter of the Radio 4 programme *Face the Facts*, but refused to talk about the leases. No comment was available from Cole & Cole.

BRIAN and Elsie Goddard and their friends Harry and Janet Blackburn, all now in their late fifties, left their native Coventry for Ilfracombe where they bought the Wooden Spoon fish restaurant as a joint venture. They paid £28,000 for the business and goodwill and in August 1982 moved into accommodation above the high street premises, agreeing with Blue Dolphin an annual rent of £5,000. Mr Goddard, who ran a small meat manufacturing firm, and Mr Blackburn, a car worker who took voluntary redundancy, had sold their homes and invested all their money in the project.

They ceased trading three years later, in 1985, when the two husbands filed petitions for bankruptcy. They had bought the lease, which had been drafted by Cole & Cole and which was due to expire in 1988, from a previous tenant and neither they nor their solicitor spotted the small print saying that the rent was to be reviewed in July 1984

and on every third anniversary. That meant that instead of an expected £10,000 annual rent at the end of the term, it would have reached more than £45,000 a year. The business was unprofitable and in arrears of rent when the landlord, David Houghton, told the two couples in April 1983 that they might not

have realised the implications of the rent review clause. He advised them to sue their Coventry solicitors for negligence. The two couples have each lost about £30,000.

They now live in rented accommodation in Ilfracombe and have issued proceedings against their former solicitors. Blue Dolphin and Mr Houghton are suing Mrs Goddard for rent arrears and she is counterclaiming damages and rectification of the lease. Final directions for trial are awaited. Their present solicitor Alan Feinson said: "We complain of the iniquity of Houghton's behaviour in inducing the two couples to buy the lease and at the iniquity of the lease. This was an ostensibly ordinary RPI business lease. Solicitors may have assumed there was no need to examine every word." He added: "For some reason Mr Houghton has worked out a brilliant way of getting at the legal profession and making money."

In a separate case, Keith Davey, now aged 55, took early retirement from the CID in 1983 to take over the West Gate Grill in Grantham, Lincolnshire, paying Blue Dolphin £35,000 for a 20-year lease at a £5,200 annual rental. Nearly three years later, as the first rent review approached, he received a letter from David Houghton, pointing out that his rent would rise to more than £100,000 at the end of term. Mr Davey, from Norfolk, successfully sued his solicitors for negligence.

A brilliant way of getting at the legal profession

Small print fooled lawyers

SOLICITORS scrutinising the rogue Blue Dolphin leases for their clients thought that they were standard commercial retail price index leases in which the rent rises every three years in line with the RPI. Many of them admit that they were fooled by the routine appearance of the leases and only skimmed them. They failed to notice that the rent review clause near the end of the 12-page document contained an enormous hidden multiplier.

The Blue Dolphin review clause is so worded as to more than double the rent at the first three-yearly review and keep it rising, like the arithmetic of compound interest, into a six-figure sum by the time of the final review.

The key wording reads: "The review rent to take effect from the date of review shall be the rent payable hereunder prior to the date of review (whether such rent is itself a

reviewed rent or the basic rent) and in addition such sum as shall be equal to the basic rent multiplied by the variable factor (hereinafter collectively called the "index linked rent")."

Thus Mr Cox's new rent was to be the pre-review one of £7,500 plus another £7,500 multiplied by the RPI - effectively increasing the annual rent at the time to £16,357. It was the phrase "in addition to" which solicitors

had failed to notice in what appeared to be a standard lease and which set the trap.

Under the agreement, three years after that, the basic rent would be similarly multiplied, leading to a final estimated rent during the last three years of the lease of about £126,000 per annum.

Another clause enabled Blue Dolphin to charge a price for consent to a transfer of the lease, making the property even less saleable.

	5%	7%	9%
Starting rent	7,500	7,500	7,500
After 3 years	16,182	16,887	17,212
After 6 years	28,282	27,943	28,790
After 9 years	37,887	41,731	48,080
After 12 years	51,896	58,623	67,175
After 15 years	66,928	78,315	94,493
After 18 years	84,118	103,007	126,951

* Based on the case of JOHN COX

Major studies Labour model for Tory charter

By DOUGLAS BROOM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

A LABOUR council scheme to guarantee the standard of local public services is being studied as a model for the prime minister's proposed "citizen's charter".

York city council's citizen's charter, the first of its kind when it was introduced in 1989, is being examined by the Downing Street policy unit. John Major said last week that his charter would specify the standards for councils and public authorities and give citizens the right to compensation if they were let down.

Labour accused the government of borrowing its idea for a quality commission to set and monitor local services.

But Rod Hills, York council's Labour leader, said he was pleased that the prime minister had accepted the value of a scheme York had pioneered and said he was happy to show ministers how to develop the citizen's charter concept.

As well as the charter, which spells out the council's objectives for the year, York pioneered the introduction of customer contracts for such individual services as street cleaning. Residents receive a leaflet listing dates and times at which their streets should be swept and their litter bins emptied. The scheme was extended to cover dustbin-emptying last year. The

cleaning department has set up a telephone line to handle complaints and the council guarantees that breakdowns in services will be rectified within eight hours. The council publishes statistics showing how it has measured up to its own targets.

The 1991 York citizens' charter, the third of its kind, will be delivered to the city's 30,000 households on Tuesday. The four-page colour tabloid promises that the council will provide quality and value for money. Targets include an increase in can, bottle and textile recycling banks and provision of a plant to remove materials containing CFCs from refrigerators dumped at council sites.

Individual streets are named as the sites of road improvements and the charter promises the building of new public toilets, pedestrian areas and a repainting programme for 1,500 council houses. The 1991 charter lists five things that the council promised to do in 1990 but failed to achieve, including building new play areas and the allocation of £680,000 in home improvement grants.

The council faces no sanctions if it fails to deliver, apart from this limited exercise in self-criticism. The names and telephone numbers of senior council officers are also printed in the charter. The council says that its network of area committees, at which residents can tackle councillors face to face, provides a fast and effective means of airing complaints.

Previn job will be left vacant

André Previn, who is to leave his post as principal conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra after next season, is not to be replaced, the orchestra said last night.

Mr Previn said that he was resigning because he wanted to spend more time at home in America than his commitment to the orchestra would allow, and because Vladimir Ashkenazy, who became musical director when Mr Previn gave up the post four years ago, had first choice on concerts and music. A spokesman for the orchestra said that the role of principal conductor had become less significant.

River polluted

A National Rivers Authority team was trying to re-oxygenate a seven-mile stretch of the Axe near Crewkerne, Somerset, yesterday, after a slurry spillage. Thousands of fish are feared dead.

Boy attacked

Doctors were trying to save the sight of a boy aged 15 yesterday after two men attacked him at Andover, Hampshire.

Sheep killed

A police helicopter was called in to search for two dogs that killed 28 sheep at a farm near Brighton yesterday.

Bond winners

Winners in the National Savings premium bonds weekly draw were £100,000, bond number 21WB 916857, winner lives in Wiltshire; £30,000, 10XB 741137, West Sussex; £25,000, 22CW 206827, Surrey.

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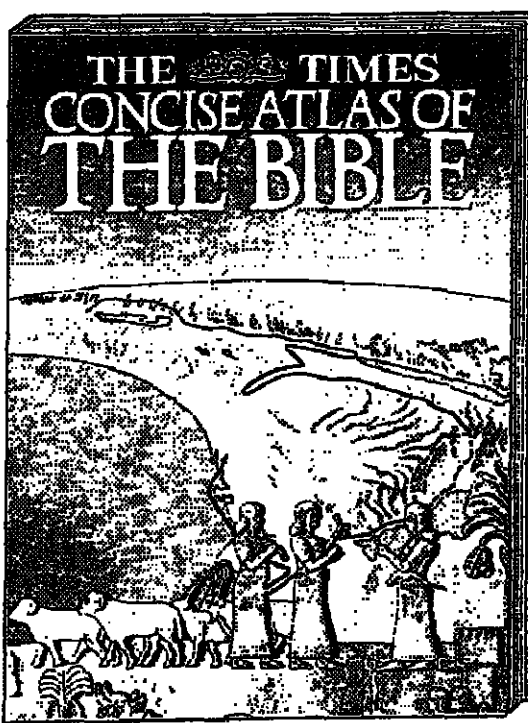
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The amazing decomposable roofrack

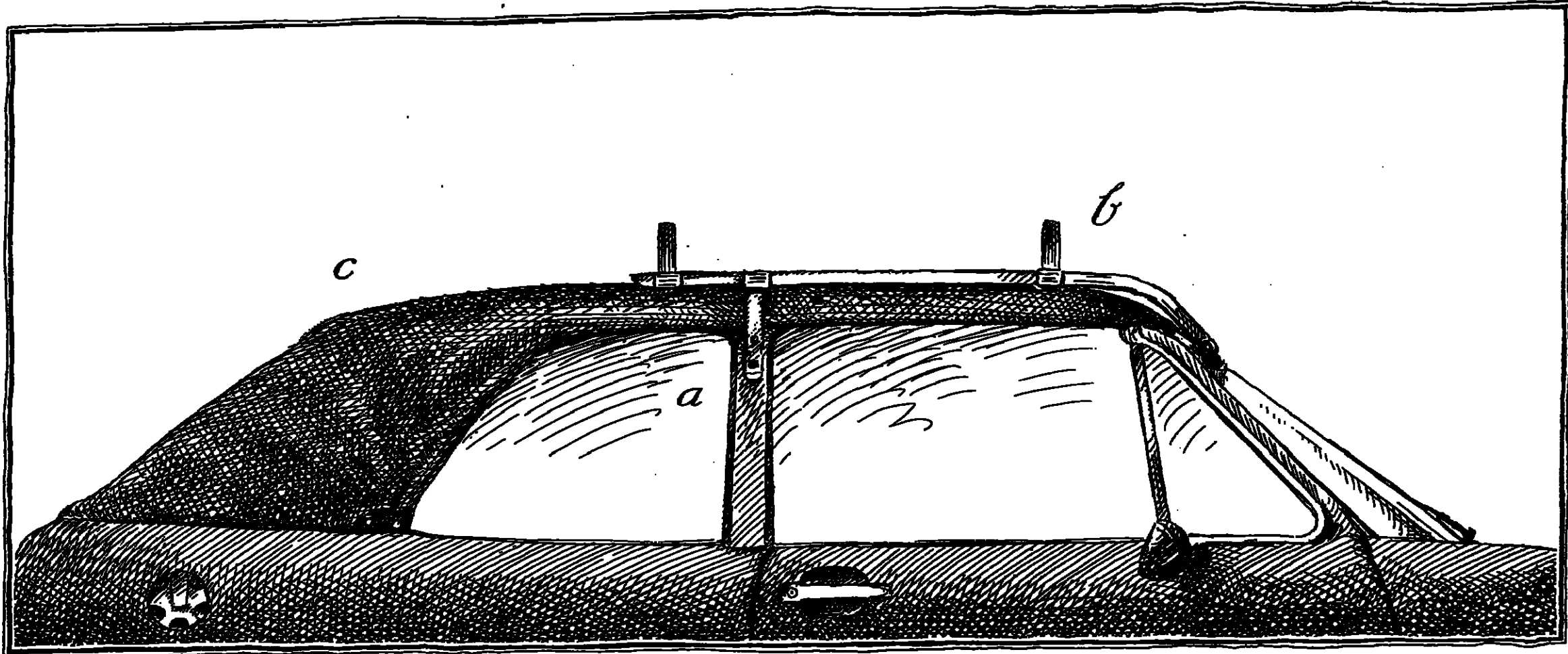


Fig. 1

(a) Supporting leg positioned in pillar bracket, concealed with cover cap. (b) Front cross member. (c) Golf Convertible hood, five layers thick, accommodating glass window with heating element.

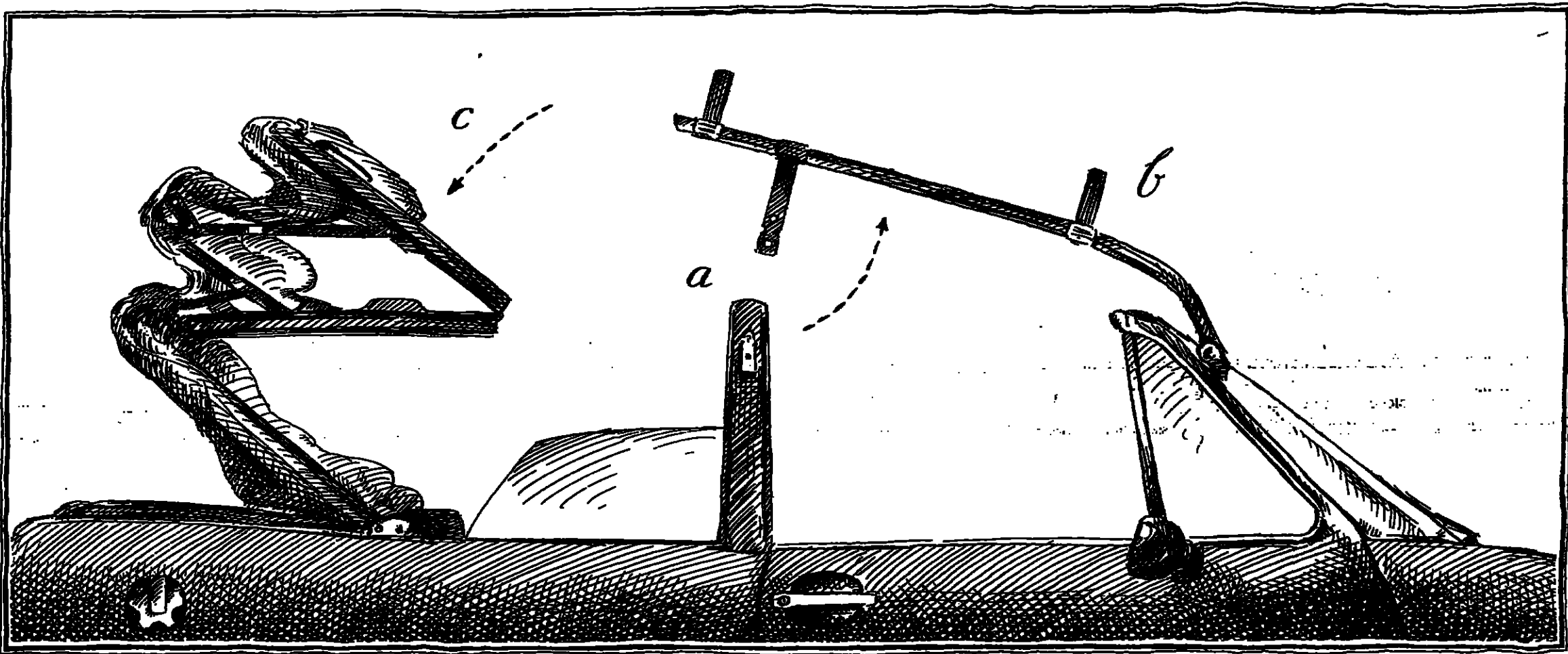


Fig. 2

Removing cover cap, release supporting leg (a) from pillar bracket. Manoeuvre roofrack until front cross member (b) is perpendicular with windscreen. Activate electrically operated hood (c).

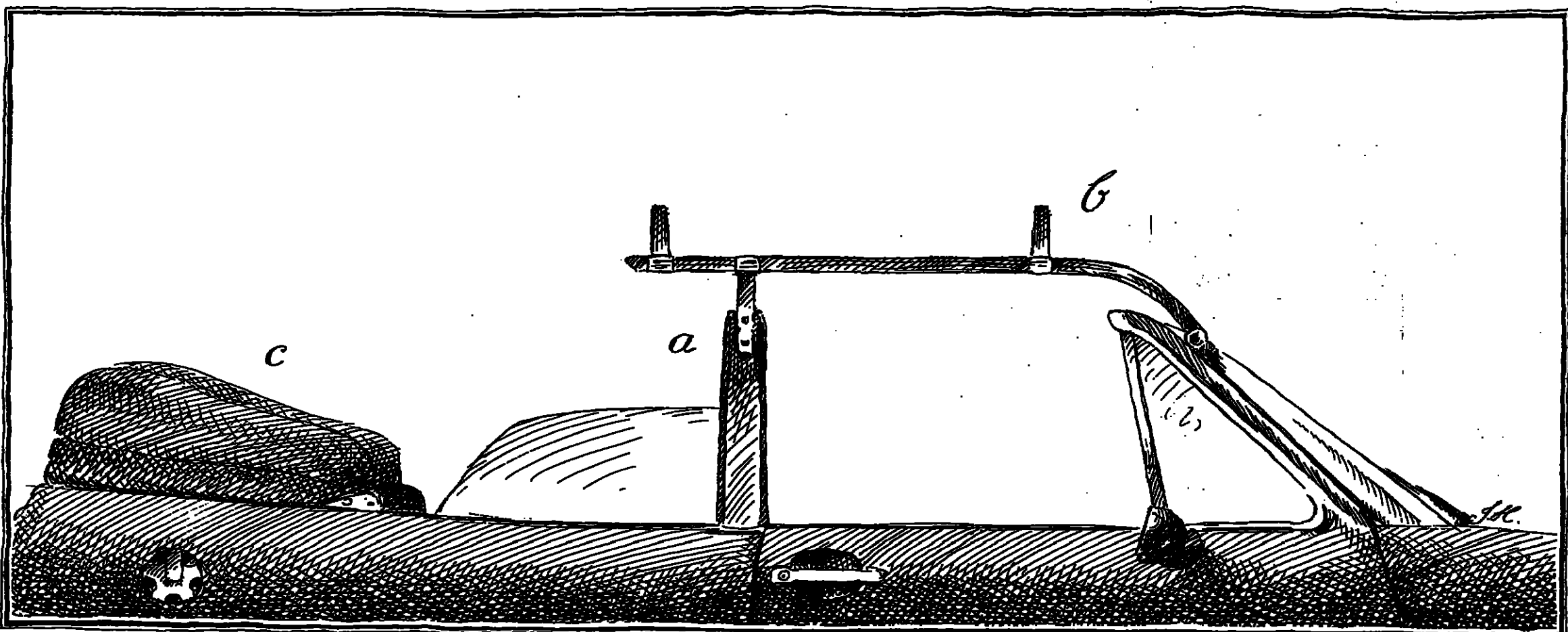


Fig. 3

Relocate supporting leg (a) into pillar bracket, replacing cover cap. Front cross member (b), with its rear counterpart, now ready to transport goods while hood (c) is fully folded.



It's not an April fool, it's a Volkswagen.

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Men warned to exercise or risk later heart disease

By THOMSON PRENTICE, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

MEN who take little exercise may put themselves almost as much at risk of heart disease as those who smoke 20 cigarettes a day, medical experts report today.

Physical inactivity is as dangerous to the heart as high blood pressure or high levels of blood cholesterol, the report by a British Heart Foundation working group says.

The comparative risks are calculated from research studies over the past 40 years of physically active men and their sedentary counterparts, such as London bus drivers and conductors, and postmen

and clerks. The working group, which includes specialists from the health department, the Health Education Authority and the Coronary Prevention Group, estimates that fewer than a fifth of the population take enough exercise.

"Physical inactivity is seldom regarded as an important risk factor for coronary heart disease and as a result, prevention policies tend to emphasise other aspects of lifestyle change," the report says. "There is now sufficient research evidence to suggest that this view should be reconsidered. It must be concluded that the risk attributable to physical inactivity in our population is sufficient to give cause for concern."

Although two million more Britons now participate in sport and exercise than three years ago, many manual jobs have been lost over the same period, the report says. Semi-skilled and unskilled men and women, the chronically unemployed and people from ethnic minorities take very little exercise.

The report, *Exercise and the Heart*, being sent to all GPs this week, urges them to set a personal example by taking up exercise. Many doctors remain unconvinced of the value of exercise, it says.

Brisk walking, swimming and cycling are beneficial if performed regularly at a level sufficient to make the individual slightly breathless after ten to 15 minutes, according to the report. Desmond Folan, medical director of the British Heart Foundation, said: "The medical profession has given an excellent lead to the public in the campaign against smoking. It should now use its undoubted influence in encouraging enjoyable exercise."

The report says that physical inactivity in men represents an increased risk of heart disease in line with that of high blood pressure, raised blood cholesterol, or smoking about 20 cigarettes a day. Studies of desk-bound senior civil servants found that those who took part in such vigorous physical exercise as swimming, jogging, racket games and cycling had, over the next eight years, less than half the incidence of coronary heart disease of their colleagues who did not pursue such activities.

"Regular aerobic, dynamic exercise has well-documented effects on cardiovascular and metabolic functions," the report says. It encouraged people with a history of heart illness to take exercise, under medical supervision. "While there is no doubt that there are situations in which exercise is potentially harmful, in most clinical contexts an appropriate level of exercise has been shown to be beneficial."

Hospital and home-based rehabilitation programmes for coronary heart disease patients should routinely include structured exercise, under appropriate medical advice, the report says.



From little acorns: a tree from a most noble line standing starkly against the sky in Shropshire, where, 340 years ago, Charles II is reputed to have perched among the boughs of an oak to elude Cromwell's men after the battle of Worcester. The tree royal oak is said to have been chopped into pieces by the king's supporters for souvenirs after the Restoration. A tree grown from the original still stands in the grounds of Boscombe, a 17th century hunting lodge in Shropshire. The lordship of the manor comes up for sale on Wednesday, but not the tree - that is on hand owned by English Heritage. According to contemporary accounts, Charles II refreshed himself with

"this milk and small beer" after the battle of Worcester and then sought refuge in the woods with William Careless, a Royalist officer (inset). Having evaded the Roundheads for a day, they climbed down from the oak, and the king cooked "a meal of mutton". Immediately the story became known, people flocked to see Boscombe and the tree. "Almost at once," an 18th century historian recorded, "the oak was injured by souvenir hunters removing its young boughs. The damage was so great that before 1680, the owners of Boscombe, Basil and Jane Fitzherbert, were forced to crop part of the tree and protect it with a high brick wall. But their action was too late."



Church critical of Orkney case social workers

By KERRY GILL

THE Church of Scotland today criticises the social workers involved in the Orkney child sex abuse case for acting with undue haste and virtually presuming that the accused parents were guilty until proved innocent.

The criticisms are in an editorial comment in the church magazine, *Life and Work*, published today. It also calls for a review of the law to prevent children being taken from their homes without sufficient proof of abuse.

"Concern for children, for parents and for simple justice demands action," it says. "The editorial says that, although it is essential to protect children from abuse, it must be done with utmost sensitivity. Events elsewhere have shown that mistakes can be made in suspected cases of abuse, which makes the apparent treatment of Orkney parents as guilty until they can prove their innocence disturbing, to say the least," it says.

The magazine says that there is no suggestion that social workers acted illegally, but that there is evidence that they had ignored Scottish Office guidelines.

In two days' time, eight Orkney parents will have the opportunity to refute allegations of involvement in ritual child sex abuse, claims that have astonished the largely farming communities from Papa Westray in the north to South Ronaldsay where the families lived in apparent rural bliss until late February. The families of all nine children taken into care by social workers on February 27 were English incomers who settled on the most southerly of the

Orkney islands hoping to bring up their children away from the worst influences of modern life. The parents have since had no contact with their children.

On Wednesday, in Kirkwall, Sheriff David Kelbie will start the first judicial assessment of the evidence laid against the parents by the Orkney social work department. He will decide whether it warrants keeping the children in care, irrespective of whether any criminal prosecutions are brought. Four QCs will speak on behalf of the parents and ask that the children be sent home. Lynne Clark, QC, will represent the social work department.

Most Orkadians seem to consider the allegations outrageous. It is claimed that a Church of Scotland minister, took part in "lewd and libidinous" behaviour involving ritual sexual abuse at a quarry on South Ronaldsay. One accused parent pointed out the spot and asked: "Furly in practical terms, how could anyone do such things without being seen by the whole island?" The landscape is "treacherous", a farmer, more than a mile away, can be seen at once. The idea of flashing lights and unmentionable behaviour taking place in seclusion here is difficult to imagine.

Emerging last week at a children's panel hearing that medical examinations of the children had found no trace of physical or sexual abuse.

The proceedings are likely to continue in private for about a month. The children will stay in care for a further two weeks, during which time social workers will seek a 21-day extension of the order.

BA flyers selected in draw

By JOHN YOUNG

CHRIS Bowers, aged 26, who lives in Fulham, west London, and works in a City bank, was aroused from his Easter morning slumber yesterday by a telephone call informing him that he had won two free first-class return tickets to Johannesburg.

His was the first name to be drawn from a giant Easter egg in what British Airways says is the world's biggest lottery, with 25,000 pairs of tickets to be handed out. On April 23, every unbooked seat on BA international flights to 94 destinations will go to the beneficiaries of the airline's publicity bonanza, aimed at "kick starting" the travel industry out of its worst ever recession.

Sir Colin Marshall, BA's deputy chairman and chief executive, said that more than 1.5 million entries had been received in the United Kingdom alone, and several million more from abroad. "The last few months have seen the most drastic fall in air traffic that we have ever experienced," he said.

"It was necessary to do something dramatic." April 23 had been selected because it was the day in the near future for which there were fewest bookings.

Mr Bowers, who is single, said he had no idea who his travelling companion would be. He had been planning to go to Zimbabwe this year, and had friends in Durban.

Another early winner was Carman Whitworth, aged 74, of Preston, Lancashire, who said his first thought was that it was an April Fool's joke. Mrs Whitworth, who has six grandchildren, will fly to Buenos Aires, where she has relatives whom she last visited 30 years ago.

Sir Colin said there had been a 20 per cent drop in passengers as a result of the recession and the Gulf war. It was impossible to cost the promotion exactly, he said, although estimates have put it at around £16 million.

School ski trip bonds to increase

TOUR operators specialising in school skiing trips are to be asked to provide a bond equal to a quarter of their annual turnover following the collapse of two such companies at the end of last week.

The Association of British Travel Agents (Abta) had to make emergency arrangements to allow 3,500 children to complete their holidays after the failure of the unrelated firms Adventure Travel International and Adventure Express. The association will also have to provide refunds for 3,000 children.

Keith Betton, Abta's public affairs manager, said that it would be asking school ski specialists to provide a bond of 25 per cent of turnover. "These companies seem to have taken bookings 18 months in advance and to collect the money six months in advance, which increases their exposure if things do go wrong," he said. "If they are going to continue to do this then we will have to have a bond which reflects this exposure."

Other tour operators, who had fewer advance bookings and therefore less compensation to be paid in the event of failure, were already being asked to increase their bonding from ten to 20 per cent.

Ministers plan one-way traffic scheme to banish M25 hold-ups

By ROBYN SHORT

CONGESTION on the M25, London's beleaguered orbital motorway, is to be eased considerably next year. The Department of Transport plans to double the capacity of the road by making both carriageways one-way, with traffic travelling clockwise or anti-clockwise on alternate days of the week.

A spokesman for Malcolm Rifkind, the transport secretary, said yesterday that the scheme would not operate at weekends, when most users were private motorists.

Last year the department considered increasing the number of lanes in each direction to four by reducing their width and introducing a 55mph speed limit. Since then road experts have conducted studies on the Continent, where many cities have alleviated traffic congestion by allowing cars with odd and even number plates into busy areas only on certain days.

The alternate traffic-flow scheme has been chosen as the most feasible for the M25. The decision to open both

carriageways to clockwise traffic on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and anti-clockwise on Tuesdays and Thursdays, will be approved by the cabinet's transport committee next week, awaits the full cabinet's approval, but Mr Rifkind's department is confident that this is a formality.

The AA yesterday welcomed the scheme, but said it would press for the M25 to be closed to commercial traffic at weekends. The RAC declined to comment until it had seen the full details.

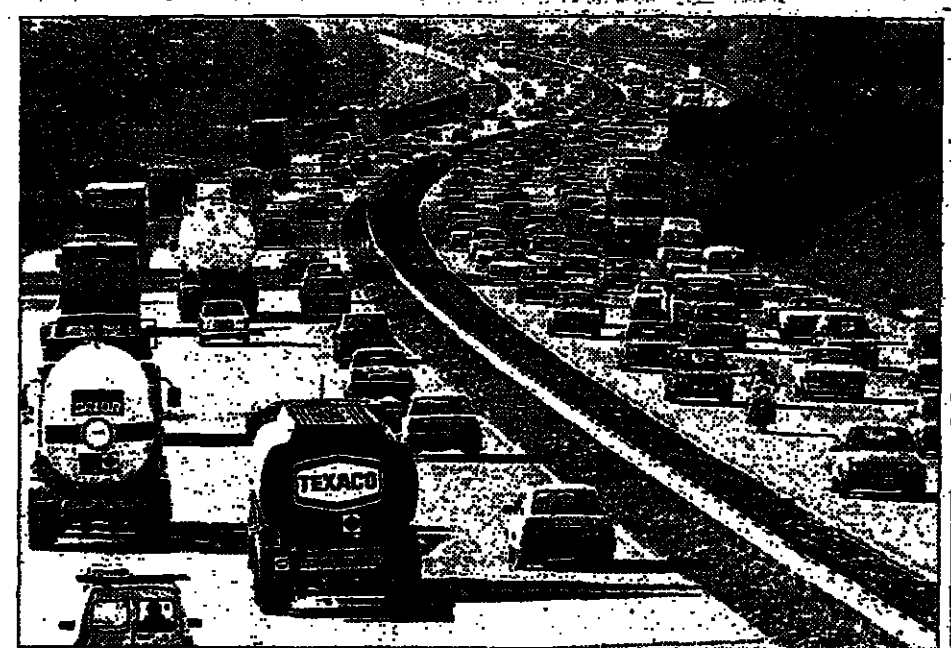
Labour frontbench spokesmen have condemned the idea, describing it as "Tory

motorway madness". A spokesman for John Prescott, the Labour transport spokesman, said: "Many drivers already have trouble telling their left from their right."

The scheme was welcomed, however, by James Hillside, of the Road Haulage Association in Weybridge, Surrey. He said last night: "We have been advocating some such revolutionary solution for some time. Transport managers will be able to arrange clockwise deliveries on some days, and anti-clockwise on others. We will all know where we stand." He said that traffic

would always be able to get to any point on the motorway. "The motorway is, after all, circular - that is what orbital means - so that traffic can always go from one point to any other, although it may sometimes increase the total distance travelled."

Residents of Swanley, Kent, are, however, strongly opposed to the scheme. One said yesterday: "Villagers use the motorway to make shopping trips to Orpington. On some days this will be a journey of two miles, and on others a journey of 117 miles. The scheme is insane."



Two-way traffic: the main cause of congestion on London's orbital motorway

New faces to move into Poet's Corner

DAVID Niven, Beatrix Potter and John Lennon are expected to join Chaucer and Shakespeare in a shake-up of Poet's Corner being planned by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey. The abbey is planning to remove memorials of lesser-known occupants to make way for 30 new notables (William Cash writes).

The abbey said yesterday that the Dean and Chapter decided to act after the embarrassment of having to turn down a request from the Trollope Society to have their hero honoured in Poet's Corner. Similar appeals have been made in the past, without success, by supporters of Oscar Wilde and John Benjamin.

Spurs may sell Gazza shares

DIRECTORS of Tottenham Hotspur football club have devised a plan to ease their financial crisis which will let them sell their most valuable asset, Paul Gascoigne, and keep him (Michael Tate writes).

The club plans to float off a separate company, Gazza Enterprises, to hold his contract, and sell eight million shares in it at £1 each. The move would make a big dent in the club's £18 million debts. Should Gazza wish at some future date to move on, Spurs would buy back Gazza Enterprises, and sell it to the bidding club. If the scheme is a success, Spurs supporters will be offered shares in Gary Lineker, Gary Mabbutt, and possibly Terry Venables.

Squaring up

REEFEATER Gin is to appeal to the European Court after an EC ruling that it must sell its gin in round bottles, rather than the square ones it has used since 1770. The company will argue that as its bottles have been in continuous production for longer than any round variety, the square shape should have priority (Jim McCue writes).

James Brough, owner of the brand, will insist on a ruling that all bottles in the EC, including milk bottles, be standardised to square shape.

Liquid gumption

Swiss Rail has placed a £2 million order for a liquid which instantly melts snow up to 5ft deep (Patrick O'Hanlon writes). The liquid, a mixture of the greenhouse gases sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, is applied by a sprinkler attached to the front of trains. Scientists at the European Weather Centre, at Galanthis Nivalus, developed the liquid after studying the structure of ice crystals in snowflakes. British Rail has expressed interest but dislikes drivers having to wear gas masks while using the sprinkler.

Police to check every white Escort in theft crackdown

POLICE are to check every white Ford Escort they see in an attempt to find the hundreds of cars which are stolen from the streets each year. The check will be carried out "soon" by Northumbria police throughout their region of Tyneside and Wearside. The date of the action will not be disclosed.

There are thousands of white Ford Escorts, Britain's biggest-selling car, on the road, making it an attractive target for a thief needing anonymity, and prompting the police decision to spend one day checking as many as they can. Vauxhall Astras, another favourite with thieves, will get similar attention on a different day.

It is a drastic measure but Northumbria police are in the front line trying to combat one of the biggest growth areas in enterprise and job creation in the country: car crime.

Northumbria had 30,000 crimes involving cars last year, one of the worst records in the country. Chief Superintendent Bob Bensley, the head of the traffic division, said: "We seem to have cornered the market." A quarter of police time is devoted to car crime nationally, the cost in insurance losses and police time adds up to £1 billion a year. Six out of ten missing

Police are taking drastic measures against car thefts. Kevin Eason reports on their new tactics

credit cards and seven out of ten stolen cheque books disappear from cars.

Reported thefts from vehicles were up 23 per cent last year and thefts of cars by 26 per cent in England and Wales, according to the latest Home Office statistics. Police forces are having to fight fire with fire by investing in the expensive, high-powered cars which the thieves love to steal to bait police in high-speed car chases.

Northumbria police has a helicopter and is buying nine 150mph Ford Sierra Cosworths, the £27,000 model which is a thief's favourite. More than £1.5 million worth of cars disappear every week, with a quarter never seen again. Cars worth £30,000 are broken up for spares by sophisticated gangs and sold in pieces for as little as £1,000. Supt Bensley says: "Northumbria police discover car thieves in every shape and size, from eight-year-old schoolboys to organised gangs who concentrate on high

performance cars which can be sold on.

One gang attached chains to a set of garage doors and dragged them off to steal a £14,000 Vauxhall Astra GTE. There are ram-raiders, teams who steal two cars: one old model to smash through a shop window and one high-performance car in which to make the escape. There are joy-riders, often teenagers who will pick a fast GTI to steal because they love the challenge of a chase.

The chases sometimes end in tragedy. Five joy-riders died last year in the Northumbria area but the lesson has not prevented thieves increasing the rate of crime. The threat of a mild court sentence is apparently no deterrent to the children addicted to the speed of driving a car at high speed, or providing a gang with a lucrative source of income. The Consumers' Association says thieves can get into many popular cars in just four seconds.

The Home Office has threatened to publish a list of cars which are easiest to steal in an effort to embarrass the manufacturers into action. Insurance companies are also about to widen their banding structure to highlight those cars with a poor security record.

New grass strain takes effort out of mowing

By LIZ GERARD

A retired Essex seedsman has developed a strain of lawn grass that grows only one inch a year, even during the warmest and wettest summers.

Clement Marchdone, aged 73, of Cutters' Green, near Chelmsford, has produced the grass after 25 years' work, but has failed to sell it to any of the leading seed companies. He started tinkering with grass varieties while still running a small nursery business.

By the time he retired in 1983, he was well on his way to his ideal grass. Two years ago, he sowed his own main lawn and said it had performed well, although two dry summers and the consequent hosepipe bans meant it had not yet had a true test.

Now he runs over the lawn with an old push mower only twice each summer to keep it looking perfect. Explaining the development of the grass from hundreds of different varieties, he said: "You pick three grasses with the quality that you want, then cross-pollinate. From these, you get

a hybrid that you grow on for a couple of years to see how it performs. When you think you've got what you want, you take the seed from the parent plant. I just kept cross-pollinating all the shortest grasses until the end product got shorter and shorter."

The Royal Horticultural Society at Wisley, Surrey, has not yet had a chance to subject Mr Marchdone's new hybrid to proper scientific trials, but a spokesman for the National Grass Research Centre at Murch Hadham, Hertfordshire, said: "If it lives up to his claims, it will be a boon to reluctant gardeners, and to commercial users of grass like golf courses and local councils."

Mr Marchdone even claims to have overcome the problem of keeping stripes in a lawn. "When the grass starts to show, you go up and down with a roller, the grass will continue to grow in that direction forever. You could even have tartan patterns if you really wanted."

Gold traces reported in daffodil pigments

By DENNIS DWYER

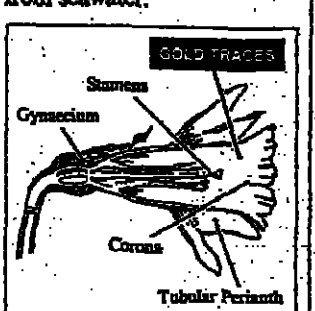
BOTANICAL scientists in Amsterdam say they have found trace elements of rare metals in the pigments of some flowers, and are hoping to prove that gold exists in daffodils. That could lead to a sharp upturn in business for the Dutch bulb industry.

Dr Jan Auhad, of the department of molecular biology at the city's municipal university, told a conference of international biologists in Durban yesterday that examination by electron microscopy of the flower part of the *pseudo-narcissus* (common daffodil) showed minute traces of the metal in some varieties. The most reactive were flowers grown in coastal parts of The Netherlands and on the Isles of Scilly.

He said the amounts of gold present were so small as to be unrecoverable by present-day commercial chemistry techniques but it should be possible, through selective propagation, to intensify the colour density of the flowers. It is expected that this would

deepen the gold trace sufficiently to make extraction a viable proposition. Dr Auhad said several million flowers would be needed to produce an ounce of gold. Marketable by-products from the mass of fibrous leaves would be required to offset the costs of metal extraction.

The Amsterdam researchers continue the work of Professor Richard Willstätter, the German organic chemist whose studies on the structure of chlorophyll brought him the Nobel Prize in 1915. His later work resulted in the granting of patents for extracting gold from seawater.



Thousands of Iraqi refugees flee to Turkish tent city

By HAZRIM TEIMOURIAN, SUSAN ELLICOTT IN WASHINGTON AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

ABOUT 2,000 Iraqi refugees streamed into Turkey in 24 hours, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported yesterday. It was the biggest group of arrivals in such a period since fighting started between Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq and Iraqi soldiers after the end of the Gulf.

Sahabettin Karpuz, the governor of southeast Hakkari province, next to Kurdish-dominated northern Iraq, said the refugees were of Turkish origin, Anatolia reported. Mr Karpuz said the Iraqi refugees were initially sheltered in a tent "city" along the border and would be transferred to refugee camps after undergoing medical examination, Anatolia added.

The latest arrivals brought to 3,000 the number of refugees since Thursday, the governor said. Kurdish residents of northern Iraq also have been fleeing by the tens of thousands recently, fearing attacks by government forces who are trying to crush a rebellion against President Saddam Hussein.

President Bush is widely seen as unwilling to intervene in the fighting inside Iraq for fear of going beyond the United Nations resolutions agreed last year after rounds of behind-the-scenes diplomacy, and for fear of igniting a controversy among Americans about his promise that the Gulf war would be "no Vietnam".

The White House succeeded in winning the initially reluctant support of the American public for a war against Saddam by portraying the allied response as a moral reaction to a territorial dispute.

Joining the Kurds or the Iranian-backed Shias, however, would open the Bush administration to criticism that it was putting American lives at risk for a philosophy or a style of government, as Washington had done during the war against communism in Vietnam.

Administration officials

were noticeably silent at the weekend about American policy toward the fighting in the north and south of Iraq. As is common when the White House wishes to keep a low profile on an issue, none of Mr Bush's military advisers appeared on yesterday's current affairs talk shows.

Leading American newspapers have added to the debate by publishing front-page accounts of the atrocities

committed by Saddam's Republican Guard on civilians, including the town of Samawah, about a mile from the area under allied control. The Washington Post yesterday quoted American troops as frustrated by having to stand idle as enemy soldiers attacked women and children later brought to an American observation post for medical treatment.

"It's very hard sitting here, not being able to do what we can," Army Lieutenant Thomas Isom, aged 26, told the Post. "We have shown more discipline in the last four days than in the whole war. If they asked for volunteers, there is not a man here who would not go north to finish the job."

Despite similar reports in past days, the American public so far has shown little sign of support for the intervention of American forces as families celebrate the homecoming of relatives. Democratic members of Congress, who have been trying to refurbish their reputations since a majority

vote against Mr Bush's Gulf policy in January, are quiet as they try to refocus attention on domestic issues, including education and crime. But the Bush administration has come under criticism from commentators to the right for leaving Saddam in power and from those on the left for leaving a festering mess inside Iraq without helping the insurgents in their fight against government troops.

The Wall Street Journal in an editorial last Wednesday said a new world order with stability in the Middle East would be easier to build if the war planners had "taken out the troublemaker and left the country's power plants alone". It added that "an American effort to give Iraq a real chance at a civil political order would be the ultimate sign of respect for the welfare of civilians".

Middle East analysts in Washington, meanwhile, say that the Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq may be the country's last chance to overthrow Saddam and the Baath party. Their assessment came as the revolt by the largely Shia population in the south reduced in intensity.

Unlike the Shias, the Kurds have widespread, recent experience of rebellion against Baghdad, they are far better organised and more united, and their mountains are ideal for sustained guerrilla warfare. Even if they lose their big cities to the Iraqi troops, Saddam's weakened army would appear to have little chance of defeating the Kurds this time, and the rebellion is expected to prove an efficient war of attrition eventually forcing the collapse of Baathist rule at the centre.

The attitude of the outside world, particularly Washington, to the Iraqi civil war may therefore affect the length of the country's ordeal, not its eventual outcome.

David Howell, the Conservative chairman of the House of Commons select committee on foreign affairs, yesterday demanded a course of action on the part of the coalition that verged on direct military intervention in Iraq.

In an interview with the BBC World Service, he urged that, apart from humanitarian aid, diplomatic recognition be extended to the Kurdish and Shia rebels in Iraq and that special forces be instructed to train their fighters in the use of heavy weapons they have captured from the Iraqi army.



Shooting gallery: a Kurdish guerrilla using a poster of Saddam for target practice in Erbil, northern Iraq



Ancient and modern: a Spaniard, wearing the white hood and black garb of penitents, carrying a wooden cross past an American-style fast-food restaurant on Gran Via, Madrid, in the traditional Easter procession

Policeman plus car targeted for theft

From CHARLES BRENNER IN NEW YORK

WITH murder and mayhem abounding, it takes an unusual crime to make headlines in New York. Aundray Burns, aged 26, from the Bronx, managed that this weekend when he tried to steal a police car with a policeman in it.

"What a town, eh?" marvelled Officer Al O'Leary, a police spokesman. "We've had subway trains taken for joy rides, buses stolen and found in other parts of the city, and patrol cars gone south for the winter, but this is the first time anyone has ever tried to take a patrol car with the officer in it."

Daniel Daly of the transit police, which operates on the subways and buses, was sitting in the passenger seat of his new Chevrolet Caprice, a standard blue and white police "cruiser", equipped with the usual rooftop lights, while John Rankin, his partner, went to buy a new gun belt.

Mr Burns then leapt into the driver's seat shouting "I gotta go, I gotta go" and tried to drive off, according to police. "I thought, what the hell are you doing here?" Officer Daly said. A mile followed, in which a police car came to a stop. Daly's help was arrested by mistake by Officer Rankin, who had been alerted by children who ran into the shop. The alleged thief, who was unarmed, was restrained and taken to jail.

The city's police are also upset over a new book by a retired highway patrol officer, Jim Egan, called *A Speeder's Guide to Avoiding Tickets*. Pleading sickness does not work, but saying "I have to get to the bathroom" often does. The police think this gamekeeper-turned-poacher is encouraging law-breaking.

Mujahedin claim victory in bitter battle for Khost

From CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

AFGHAN mujahedin guerrillas claimed last night to have captured the strategic border city of Khost after a fierce battle lasting more than a fortnight, involving at least 12,000 rebel forces. But the Afghan government immediately rejected the claim, saying that the city was still in its control.

A spokesman for President Najibullah's Soviet-supported government said that attacks have intensified since the mujahedin launched their offensive on the city near the Pakistani border. But he said Kabul forces still held the city.

The city has been a prized rebel target since the Afghan war began 12 years ago. If it has fallen into mujahedin hands — and there is no independent confirmation — then it will certainly be named as the capital of an interim government.

Afghan resistance leaders based in the Pakistani city of Peshawar also claimed that an important government artil-

lery base had been seized near Khost airport. They rejected Afghan government claims on Friday that the offensive against the city had collapsed. The battle for Khost began in mid-March with an intense artillery barrage and ground attack. In classic Afghan fashion, thousands of rebels and tribesmen have been swarming to the city in the hope of looting it.

Khost has been massively fortified by the Kabul government over the years. The rebels have been repulsed many times, and the city has become a symbol of the fight

for control of the country. Najibullah Lafraie, the information minister of the Pakistan-based mujahedin government in exile, said last night that Khost airport had fallen into rebel hands. That clearly would be a devastating loss to the government, but no independent confirmation of the claim was available last night.

He added that at least 15 guerrillas had been killed at a base near the Pakistan border on Saturday by a Soviet missile fired from Kabul. Other sources said that the death toll was at least 80.

Since the offensive began Khost has been supplied by airlift. Rebels claimed that many of the supplies, dropped from high altitude, had landed in areas under their control.

Amin Wardak, one of the main resistance commanders, and Naim Majrooh, director of the Afghan information centre in Peshawar, said they had been informed of the fall of Khost in radio messages sent by representatives of Jalal Ddin Haqqani, the chief of guerrilla operations at Khost. Other mujahedin sources said that 19 government positions had been seized on Saturday, and that 150 soldiers and militiamen had been killed.

The last serious battle for Khost ended in early 1988, when Soviet troops were still in Afghanistan. After a three-month siege a relief contingent of Afghan troops broke through, giving the Kabul government a much-needed morale boost.

In recent weeks the rebels have advanced to the outskirts of Khost, capturing the old airport, which has been replaced by a new runway inside the town. The Afghan government "substantially reinforced the Khost garrison some weeks ago."

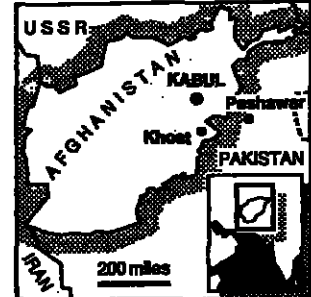
Magoda district of Natal, raising the toll to 25 killed in the violence that erupted in the area on Thursday. Newspapers said yesterday that black leaders must take responsibility for the continuing fighting in townships. "Apartheid can be advanced as a mitigating factor, but apartheid at its worst did not induce black people to behave with the barbaric disregard for life which has manifested itself in the township power struggles of the past year," the Sunday Times said.

Black leaders fail to halt Natal killings

From ASSOCIATED PRESS IN JOHANNESBURG

THE bodies of eight people have been found in Natal province soon after Nelson Mandela, the deputy president of the African National Congress, and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the Inkatha leader, pledged fresh efforts to halt factional fighting in the black townships.

A police report yesterday for the previous 24 hours said two people were stabbed to death in separate incidents near Port Shepstone in Natal. South African radio reported that six more bodies were found in the



The Pope condemns injustice in Middle East

Rome — The Pope in his Easter Sunday address yesterday criticised the death and destruction of the Gulf war, condemned the oppression of people in the Middle East and appealed for a just international order (Paul Bonner writes).

He had celebrated Easter Mass in St Peter's, filled with thousands of faithful, while tens of thousands stood on the square. He called for peace and deplored "long-neglected aspirations of the Palestinian, Kurd and Albanian peoples".

He told the Roman Catholic minority in Albania, where the first free elections since before the second world war were being held, to "be courageous" and said "each person must freely profess his own religion".

The theme of world peace emerged forcefully in the big Catholic festival since the Gulf war, which the Pope referred to as "the darkness of death which has recently obscured the community of mankind". Afterwards the Pope delivered his traditional *Urbi et Orbi* message of peace to the world in 54 languages.

● JERUSALEM: The Latin Rite Patriarch in Jerusalem appealed to Israeli leaders on Easter Sunday address to seize the opportunity to solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict after the Gulf war. "Peace is the best protection for the people of Israel, for the lead of Israel, as well as for the Palestinians and the leaders of the Palestinians," Michel Sabbah, the Patriarch said. (Reuters)

Benin amnesty

Cotonou — The council set to oversee Benin's transition to democracy announced it has granted an unconditional amnesty to the former Marxist dictator, Math Kerekou, for all the crimes committed during his 18 years of autocratic rule. (AP)

PLO refusal

Sidon — Palestine Liberation Organisation guerrillas in Lebanon are refusing to disarm despite government demands to do this by the end of April or risk being forced to do so by Lebanese and Syrian troops, maintaining that the weapons are needed "to resist the Israeli enemy". (Reuters)

Welfare cuts

Wellington — New Zealand's expensive welfare system comes under the first of what may be many fatal blows. Plans to the jobless, such as single mothers will be cut 10 to 16 per cent and universal child benefits will be scrapped. Jim Bolger, the prime minister, told the nation to face to an economic crisis. (AFP)

Colony pressure

London — Douglas Hurd, foreign secretary, leaves to visit Hong Kong. Peking, in Hong Kong, expected to be pressed members of the Chinese community to appoint a politician to govern the colony run up to 1997, when sovereignty reverts to China.

Sounding off

Warsaw — The rock group Dire Straits have cancelled concert in Poland in protest against the pirating of tapes of their albums. Polish PAP news agency reported: Poland has no legislation against pirating, widespread here. (AFP)

Hagglers restore life to the souks

From JAMIE DETTMAR IN KUWAIT CITY

"Sixteen dinars! Sixteen!" An unfortunate fly buzzing around Muhammad's face got in the way of a violent hand wave of dismissal and fall on one of five 110lb sacks of flour at the centre of the row.

"You see, they are blood-suckers, they behave like Iraqis," said Muhammad, an Egyptian cafe owner, as he pointed to the two smiling Kuwaitis sitting in the corner. "In Saudi Arabia each sack costs two or three dinars."

After strenuous haggling in true souk fashion, the price came down to 10 dinars per sack and Muhammad winked in triumph to his son. At \$3.3 per dinar, he had managed to save over \$19 a sack.

Like a growing number of shopkeepers and cafe owners, Muhammad is adapting to the changed trading circumstances in Kuwait. Yesterday he started with his sons to do business again.

The opening of the banks and the introduction of new dinar notes eight days ago is slowly priming the pump in grassroots business in Kuwait. Garages were the first to open, followed quickly by barbers and laundries. Over the weekend, many other types of shops opened, including butchers, newsagents and a few electronic outlets whose owners had managed to hide stock from the Iraqis.

Most car mechanics had started some freelance work from the moment the emirate was liberated. A steady supply of spare parts cannibalised from the hundreds of damaged cars littering the streets kept them going. But now many of them are finding it difficult to buy the parts they need from Saudi Arabia.

Most mechanics are Palestinian, and like other non-Kuwaitis in the emirate will not be allowed to re-enter if they leave now, even for a brief resupply trip.

"We have to use Kuwaitis who can go to Doha," said Mizar Balaawi. "It is very expensive and often they do not get all I need." He pointed to a battery delivered that morning. "In Saudi Arabia it costs 12 dinars. Here anything from 30 to 60 dinars. It will not work because they gave me no acid."

A lot of shopkeepers are trading outside their businesses, taking the few goods

they have to patches of wasteland where they join impromptu markets. Cigarettes are the only things to have fallen in price since liberation. A couple of weeks ago, a carton of 200 US-made cigarettes cost anything from \$40 to \$120. Now supplies are in abundance, probably as a result of sharp deals with American servicemen at ports in Saudi Arabia. Cartons are now on sale for just \$7.50.

A wide variety of goods were on sale yesterday at a market in the district of Silmiah. Most foodstuffs were tinned, though there were four dubious-looking fish rotting in the hot midday sun. "You want one?" asked their owner. "The small one, just 12 dinars, the bigger 30 dinars." By this time, his efforts to keep a swarm of flies away from the fish were failing.

Farther down the road, there was a huge crowd outside the local co-operative society which was distributing free government food. But the food soon ran out and the crowd started to head towards the market. Anger mounted when shoppers found most of the food had been sold to the traders at the warehouses holding government stock.

Laos consigns the hammer and sickle to the scrapheap

LAOS has become the latest communist nation to begin to discard the visible symbols of Marxism. The hammer and sickle emblem of communist solidarity is to disappear, as is the very word socialism.

The changes come in the wake of massive Soviet aid cutbacks to the impoverished, landlocked South-East Asian state whose fortunes have been tied to the Soviet bloc since the communist military victories in Indochina in 1975.

It became apparent yesterday that the Laotian communist leadership has changed the country's national motto. Until the fifth congress of the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party, which ended at the weekend, the state credo was "peace, independence, unity and socialism". The new state motto, according to Kaysone Phommvihane, the party's leader and a former head of the

communist masquis, is "peace, independence, democracy, unity and prosperity". The word socialism has vanished and democracy and prosperity have been added — though both seem still far off.

Tongloun Sisoulith, the deputy foreign minister, said: "It is not such a change because democracy and prosperity really mean socialism."

Western diplomats and reporters were permitted to attend sessions of the party congress for the first time, a measure of the new openness here. But while there were delegations from 19 national communist parties at the last congress in 1986, only four were present this time, a sign of the shrinking communist world. While the hammer-and-sickle emblem was visible on the party banner that formed the backdrop to the congress platform, the days are numbered in Laos for these motifs. This became clear when a

Vientiane has changed its national motto to embrace democracy but there is no great demand yet for political pluralism, James Fringie writes

10ft crest, showing only the nation's insignia, was recently erected on the reviewing stand from which party leaders watched parades in Vientiane's main square. A Soviet resident said: "You would have to say that this is highly significant." Diplomats said yesterday they had been told the hammer and sickle would be "phased out".

For the present, the party remains the only permitted political organisation, and there are no plans for a multiparty system soon. Indeed, there is not much public demand for political pluralism. People are still enjoying the small improvements that a relatively free market economy has brought during the past two

years. Average salaries are the equivalent of only £12 a month. But Laotian television has reported on the Gorbachev-Yeltsin imbroglio, perhaps as a warning against demands for too much change too quickly.

In January, more than 100 Soviet specialists were called out of Laos and many of those remaining may go soon. Soviet aid has also been cut drastically. After 1992, the Soviet Union says all military purchases must be paid for in hard currency, though Moscow will give Laos until early next century to repay its debt of 750 million roubles (£750 million at the official exchange rate). Now the Laotian government must attract investment and aid from

Western countries if the population of four million, mainly subsistence farmers, has any hope of breaking its cycle of poverty.

Mr Kaysone, aged 70, a former leader of the communist Pathet Lao, told the party congress that one of the tasks ahead was to set up a state apparatus to be run according to the constitution and law and "by the people, for the people". Another aim, already under way, was to move to a free market economy, the veteran Marxist leader said.

One Western ambassador said yesterday: "It's all part of the process of experimentation and opening up going on here. You don't have to be an Einstein to see that states with central controlled economies are just not delivering the goods. The message has got through."

● HANOI: Faced by a food shortage, the Phnom Penh government has made an inter-

national appeal for food aid, the Cambodian news agency SPA reported yesterday. It said the government wanted to know the country faced a shortfall in the order of 100,000 tonnes of rice which it blamed on a poor 1990 harvest caused by a lack of fertilisers and a long drought.

Phnom Penh was seeking assistance in rice and in agricultural supplies such as fertiliser, pesticides and fuels to help a need population avoid any threat this year's rice harvest.

Cambodia's food production capacity, ravaged by a 12-year civil war between the pro-Vietnam government in Phnom Penh and the armed resistance, estimated at 2.5 million tonnes annually, against a need of 2 million tonnes for its population of 8.6 million. Some 3.7 million acres of land are in rice production, against 6.2 million acres before 1975. (AFP)

Why B to

le Pop ndem justice Middle East

The Pope in Sunday address criticised the death of the Gulf and the oppression in the Middle East for a just order (Paul Boyer).
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d the Roman Ca in Albania, a free elections, he second work ing held, in and said "cast freely prola gion".
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The council ce Benin's tran cracy announced granted an un nnesty to the fe dictator, Ma for all the d ed during his 18 tatic rule. (AP)

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New Zeal re welfare syste day the first of many fatal blow s the jobless s others will be percent and un profits will be wger, the prime d the nation to face onomic crisis. (AP)

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The rock p nits have cancel in Poland to pe he pirating of ca f their albums. AP news agenc Poland has no le inst pirating, wh ead here. (AP)

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WE LAUNCHED our round teabag to a nation of amused and bemused sceptics. Since then, however, our sales have never been higher.

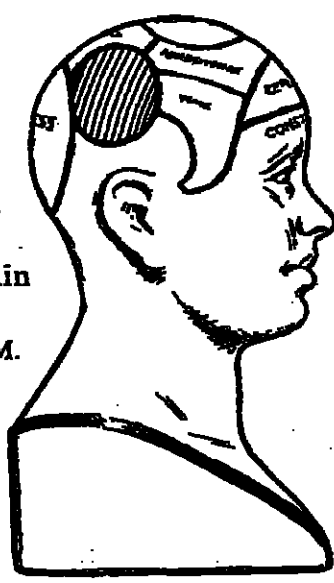
Our original followers are now more devoted. And over two million others have become faithful converts.

Why this turnabout?

IT'S ALL IN THE MIND.

Recent experiments have proved that the right hemisphere of the brain is triggered by shape (Professor J. M. Kneebone, 'What Brain?', August '90).

One area particularly - the orbicular cortex - responds to roundness. This in turn stimulates

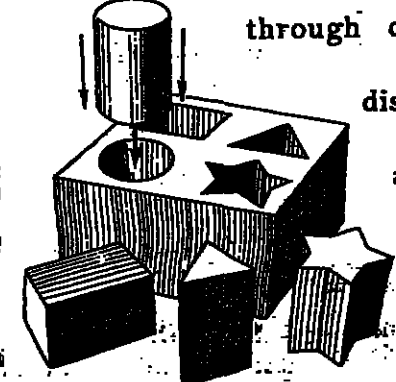


The right hemisphere of the brain featuring the orbicular cortex or 'meditation' trigger.

'meditation' nodes in the left hemisphere, leading us to physically rest and mentally relax. The ideal state to enjoy a cup of tea, no?

"TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD..."

In 1912, the child psychologists Vizard and Murphy suggested our first experiences in life symbolically 'shape our future'. For example, recall the popular children's toy where shaped blocks must be placed



through corresponding holes. They

discovered the cylinder was always the first shape to be successfully slotted, because of its lack of edges. Such success is precisely what

is triggered in the brain as our teabag fits snugly into a cup or teapot.

THE DIVINE CIRCLE.

Art historian The Rt. Reverend David

Johnson believes the circle to have been worshipped from as early as 2050 B.C. (to the nearest round number).

"The Sumerians adored the planets," he explains, "idolising their roundness. And the Zen sect - fathers of tea drinking - regarded the circle as the earthly representation of perfect enlightenment." Consider, too, the early Christians who chose a circular halo to symbolise divinity.



Circles have played a large part in man's religious quest, contributing to the so-called 'halo-effect'.

Perhaps this explains why the saying, "More Tetley, vicar?" has become so widely heard in rectories across the land.

MODERN INFLUENCES.

But what do circles 'mean' to us Brits nowadays?

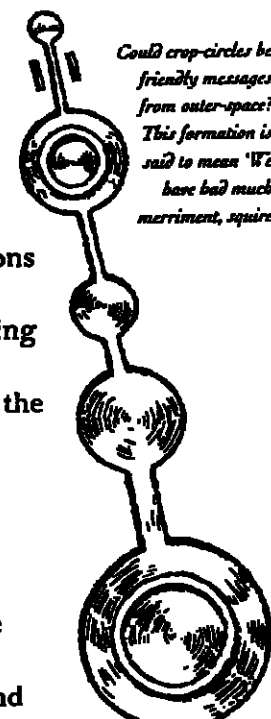
Gesture to a friend by joining your first finger and thumb into a ring and he will assume he has your seal of approval.



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Some specialists even believe the crop circles that recently appeared in Wiltshire are actually messages of welcome from alien lifeforms.



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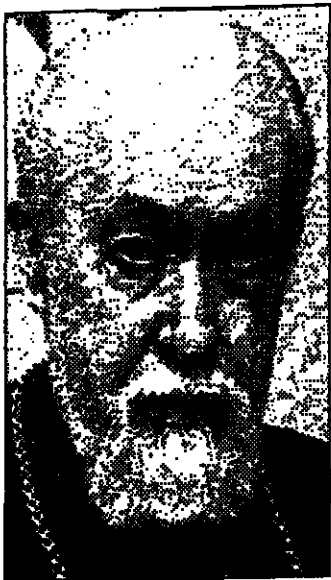
There are some people who might argue our blend of thirty of the finest teas is the secret of our success. And others who might try to persuade you our advertising is responsible. But now

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Why Britain has come round to our way of thinking.

Cardinal comes home to lead Ukraine church into the open



Lubachivsky: the first open Uniate Mass since 1946

THE Uniate Catholics of the Ukraine, who belong to one of the most repressed churches under communism, celebrated yesterday the homecoming of their primate-in-exile, Cardinal Myroslav Lubachivsky. After more than four decades underground, the Church has come into the open and on to the streets.

The emotional Mass celebrated by Cardinal Lubachivsky in Lvov was the first official act of worship since the Church was dissolved by Stalin almost half a century ago.

The Church, which worships according to Eastern rites but swears allegiance to the Pope, was always regarded by the Communists as a potential fount of nationalist unrest. After the Soviet incorporation of Ga-

licia and the Carpathian Ukraine, the Kremlin embarked on a programme of sovietisation. A sham church council met in Lvov in March 1946 to sever the Church's links with Rome and absorb it into the Orthodox Church. The Ukrainian link with the West was supposed to be cut.

The Orthodox Church opened up scores of churches in the western Ukraine where it never maintained a noticeable presence. It tried to give itself a Ukrainian gloss - priests delivered sermons in the Ukrainian language and the church authorities appointed Ukrainian bishops. Eventually it succeeded in capturing part of the Uniate Catholic flock.

But the real Church had gone underground. There were about 350 priests

operating secretly and at least three clandestinely ordained bishops. They were led from abroad, first by Cardinal Josyf Slipyi, and then by his successor, Cardinal Lubachivsky. Unlike the Reform Baptists, who have also been persecuted, the Uniate Church was never banned by law. Instead priests were arrested on charges of anti-Soviet propaganda or of "slandering Soviet reality". KGB action against the Church was based mainly on secret administrative regulations. That gave the Uniate Catholics a

loophole to press openly for the registration of their Church. It also made it easier for President Gorbachev to give ground.

There have been remarkable instances of priestly courage over the past decade. In the village of Holobutiv, near Lvov, they still remember how disguised KGB agents entered the church building to shout down the priest and bully the parishioners. The congregation turned on the agents and literally kicked them out.

In the village of Kolodnya, a muddy one-street farming

community, the KGB ripped out the electric cable from a church and emptied a wheelbarrow full of excrement near the altar. Many Uniate communities use the Orthodox church for their services, with the approval of the Orthodox priest. That has made adjustments easier.

The Orthodox Church has to share some of its churches with the Uniate Catholics and find a way of living together. Orthodox believers are deserting in large numbers to the newly approved Uniate churches. Although priests started to work openly in 1988, their legal status is not resolved. Soviet legislation last September cleared most obstacles to registration, but there are still problems with a Church whose hierarchy is based abroad. Cardinal Lubachivsky's return to Lvov, where his official title is the Major Archbishop, is an important final step in securing legal safeguards for the Church.

The cardinal recently held talks with Metropolitan (archbishop) Kyryl of Leningrad to work out how the Orthodox and the Uniate Churches should co-exist.

These are the new conflicts and dilemmas for the underground church. It is no longer a question of eluding the KGB. Now inter-church friction is the problem. Despite the advertised presence of the papal nuncio in Lvov today, relations with the Vatican are a bit prickly. The Uniate Church, following Orthodox practice, allows married priests. The Vatican put up with this while the priests were working underground in the Ukraine; spe-

cial provisions have been made for an underground church. Even so, the Church was barred from ordaining married men outside Ukraine. However, Cardinal Slipyi did ordain married Uniate priests in Rome and sent them as missionaries to North America.

Cardinal Lubachivsky, prompted by stern letters from the Vatican, has tailed this practice. But advisers point out that shift from underground open church will need an understanding from the Vatican.

Open theological colleges and seminaries will have to be established in the Ukraine and men will have to be found to meet the growing popular demand for Uniate priests.

Leading article, page 10

Joyful voters in Albania rush to bury stalinism

From JOHN HOLLAND IN TIRANA

ALBANIA's political spring dawned yesterday, ten days after the official turn of the season. No matter what the outcome of the first free election in decades, most voters agreed that stalinism in Albania is dead and buried.

Outside polling station 220 Sali Berisha, whose opposition Democratic Party was expected to make a strong challenge to the communist Party of Labour for control of parliament, described it as "a great day for the Albanian people". Mr Berisha predicted "total victory", but asked if he was a candidate for president he replied four times it was "a decision for the newly elected parliament".

The state-run Radio Tirana announced on its noon broadcast that "everybody must know that today Albania is turning the page". An estimated 1.9 million people were expected to vote from the industrial town of Shkoder to the volatile port of Durres.

President Alia pronounced the election "a great day for the Albanian people" as he

cast his ballot in front of dozens of journalists at polling station 5. Mr Alia had indicated his uneasiness at the prospect that his party would be thrown out of office but declared that he was "not a dictator", a reference to the ruthless image his party holds, thanks to the legacy of the late Enver Hoxha.

The communist prime minister, Fatos Nano, said after voting that "at last we showed the world that we have the necessary democratic culture for solving our problems".

It was a strange scene for all concerned: it was only last summer that Albanians screwed up the courage to show the authorities that they were tired of sitting in Europe's doghouse (some Albanians derisively call it the "outhouse") and scaled embassy walls in Tirana seeking asylum. Many voters yesterday were shaking when they entered the polling booths; some wept when they left.

Eleni Pashko, mother of the Democratic Party deputy chairman, Gramoz Pashko, cried after casting her ballot. "My son and I have suffered so much together. We just want our freedom, please."

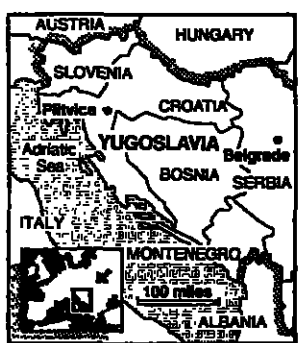
In the Hoxha era, the curbed polling booth existed for those who wanted a choice but nobody dared to use it. "It was considered treacherous to do anything but take the slip of paper with Comrade Enver's name on and simply drop it in the wooden box," said one voter.

Voting in those days was a sombre affair, but yesterday in the coastal town of Kavaja, often referred to as the "birthplace of the Albanian revolution", the scene at one polling station was festive. At the house-turned-polling station of Bukur Gjuzi, aged 54, more than 85 per cent of the 360 eligible voters in the precinct had cast their ballots by noon. Mrs Gjuzi was shuffling between the kitchen and the front yard with coffee and sweets for voters, who had a choice of three names on the list, none of them communist.

"I am proud that my house has become a symbol of our new freedom," she said.

In Hoxha's time, participation in the elections, which were held every four years, was always 100 per cent with almost 100 per cent approval for the Party of Labour. The polls were open for only one hour and the results were known minutes after they closed. This time election officials believe that conclusive results probably will not be known for at least 24 hours.

Prisoners' revenge, page 1



Army alert as Serbs clash with Croats

From DESSA TREVISAN IN BELGRADE

THE Yugoslav state presidency called an emergency session and deployed federal army units yesterday after one of the bloodiest clashes between Serbs and Croats, in central Croatia.

One policeman was killed and 11 others wounded as Croatian police clashed with Serbian secessionists in the Plitvice national park. Serbs were protesting over the claim sovereignty over the national park, which was occupied by rebel Serb police units on Friday. They expelled park rangers and Croatian tourist officials.

Croatian police responded by storming the national park shortly after dawn yesterday.

The clash was one of the bloodiest between Serbs and Croats, whose accord is essential if Yugoslavia is to survive as one country, but which this incident makes more remote as the rift grows between the two ethnic groups. A statement issued by the state presidency yesterday said: "Units of the Yugoslav army were deployed during the day while the incident was in progress after emergency telephone consultations and agreement by the Yugoslav presidency."

The statement added that the clashes had ended but gave no further information. Belgrade radio and Croatian police officials said the army was acting as a buffer between Croatian police and the Serbs on a road between Plitvice and the nearby town of Titova Korenica.



Flourish of freedom: a resident of Tbilisi, Mikhail Didebulidze, casting his vote yesterday during the referendum on the restoration of Georgian sovereignty. The southern republic, against a background of escalating violence, is expected to vote overwhelmingly to break with Moscow

Georgians flock to polls in vote on independence

From MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

TWO weeks after boycotting President Gorbachev's national referendum on the future of the Soviet Union, people in the southern republic of Georgia yesterday flocked to polling stations to vote on the restoration of Georgia's statehood.

In Tbilisi, the capital, almost 75 per cent of those eligible had voted by the middle of the day. The figure was 62 per cent in some 50 of the republic's 71 regions, according to the Georgian mission in Moscow.

Voters were asked: "Do you agree that the state independence of Georgia should be restored on the basis of the independence act of May 26, 1918?" The result is expected to give Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a decisive mandate for declaring the republic independent after 70 years of Soviet rule.

Mr Gamsakhurdia was accompanied to the polling station by Richard Nixon, the former American president.

Although ethnic Georgians are overwhelmingly in favour

of independence, the predominantly non-Georgian regions of Abkhazia in the west and South Ossetia in the north wish to remain in the Soviet Union. Yesterday's voting took place against a background of escalating violence in South Ossetia, which last year declared its sovereignty and pledged its allegiance to Moscow. The population of the region is predominantly Ossetian and the main city, Tskhinvali, has been under siege for the past two months by Georgians trying to keep the region inside Georgia.

On the eve of yesterday's referendum, Mr Gorbachev issued an ultimatum to the Georgian leadership to act at once to end the violence. Within hours, 12,000 armed Georgians were reported to be massing for an assault on Tskhinvali. The city has been without food, water and electricity for long periods, there are almost nightly gun battles.

In Moscow, the Russian congress of people's deputies called on Georgia to re-establish the autonomy of South Ossetia, dissolved last December. In an 887-14 vote, with 14 abstentions, the Russian deputies passed a six-point resolution urging the Georgian supreme soviet to restore South Ossetian autonomy and calling for talks between the two republics. The deputies asked Georgia to lift the blockade they said it imposed on Tskhinvali and free Thoroz Kulkumbegov, president of the South Ossetian soviet, arrested in January.

He had called for the resignation not only of Mr Yeltsin, but also of President Gorbachev.

Viktor Isakov, a deputy from Mr Yeltsin's home city of Sverdlovsk, was one of six Russian parliamentary leaders to have forced this extraordinary congress session by signing a condemnation of Mr Yeltsin.

Mr Yeltsin's supporters still hoped to have the question of a directly elected Russian presidency included in the agenda, while his opponents had not yet abandoned hope of forcing a no-confidence vote on the Russian leader. However, neither group has sufficient votes to gain a straight majority.

On Saturday, deputies had been shocked and angered by a speech made by one of Mr Yeltsin's opponents in which he had called for the resignation not only of Mr Yeltsin, but also of President Gorbachev.

Now derided as "dances with garbage", the Campo Indians in southern California have signed a contract for a 600-acre landfill. The Kaws of Oklahoma have similar plans, while the Mohawks in New York state are in the middle of a long-running dispute with General Motors and other industrial giants over pollution in the St Lawrence river which is sacred to them.

At Pine Ridge, which supplied most of the extras for *Dances with Wolves*, tribal leaders say that the film will help to educate the outside world about Indian culture. But, they insist, the 12,000 Lakota at Pine Ridge are owed much more for the wrongs over the past 100 years. Their main complaint is about land. Pine Ridge is not their chosen home. They were forced off their ancestral lands in the Black Hills 100 miles away by white settlers and soldiers a century ago in a land grab. The Supreme Court recently declared this illegal and ordered the federal government to pay the Sioux \$300 million (£171 million) in compensation. "We were not thinking of the money. Land is sacred to us and we will never accept money in exchange for land. It's insulting. We want our land back, period," said Wilbur Between Lodges, vice-president of the Pine Ridge council.

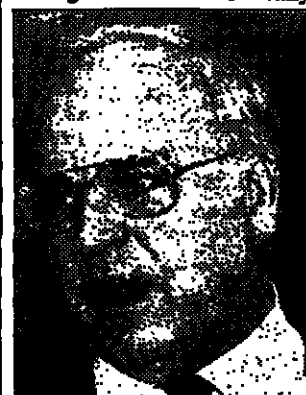
The return of 1.7 million acres of some of the most beautiful farmland in America is probably a pipe-dream for the Sioux, who scrape a living from the near-sterile alkaline soil of the badlands. But they still intend taking their fight to Congress in the hope of overturning the Supreme Court's compensation decision. Mr Between Lodges said that the reservation faced the struggle of freeing themselves from depen-

Broken promises weigh down Kohl

From IAN MURRAY IN BONN

HELMUT Kohl, the German chancellor, on his annual slimming course in Austria, ought to be spending the holiday in east Germany, according to most of his compatriots polled at the weekend by the Wickert Institute. In the east, no less than 87 per cent believed he should be spending the time with them rather than in a luxury health spa stripping off excess weight. In the west, too, 63 per cent thought it would have been better for Herr Kohl to spend Easter in the east.

The chancellor, who tips the scales at about 17st by the end of each winter, is on his annual crash diet at Bad Hofgastein on the Austrian lakes, eating virtually nothing. This year, however, the chancellor claims he is working while slimming. He says he finds that "fasting is the best thing for thinking and concentrating" and he has many



Kohl: slimming down in size and popularity

weighty matters to think about.

When he returns to the fray in slimmed-down form, he has promised to visit the east, where he has not been seen since the election campaign. Posters have been going up in the east saying: "Herr Kohl, don't you dare to come to Leipzig any more?" The chancellor's name is greeted with boos and catcalls during demonstrations.

Last Monday more than 100,000 people took to the streets of cities in east Germany, 80,000 in Leipzig alone, to protest at unemployment and slow progress towards economic revival. The *Leipziger Tageblatt* reported that while tens of thousands demonstrated "the man they blame is dieting in Austria".

The local paper in Weimar, the *Thüringische Landeszeitung*, commented tersely: "If all the promises made by politicians from Bonn, had been kept, we would be living in a land of milk and honey."

Herr Kohl normally takes a near-monastic vow of silence during his annual diet, but this year he issued a scathing riposte to the clamour from the opposition Social Democrats for a new election. While there is no likelihood of either new elections or a grand coalition, Herr Kohl is being widely advised that he must consult more with the opposition on policies to tackle the problems of the east.

This year the chancellor's worries may keep him slim throughout the summer.

Britain faces UN test on right

New York - Britain questioning from a UN Nations committee today allegations that the security forces operated a "shoot to kill" policy in Northern Ireland (James Bone writes). UN panel will also challenge Britain's practice of detaining suspects for up to seven days before being charged, and demand explanation of the killing of the Birmingham Six.

Sources say Britain deny that the security forces use deadly force in Northern Ireland except in self-defence and will defend the Prevention of Terrorism Act rule detention as a necessary government will also be forced to acknowledge that the were wrongfully convicted two pub bombings in 1976 which 21 people died. D the three-day interrogations Britain, last questioned 1985, will also answer queries about Hong Kong.

Britain agreed to submit itself to UN scrutiny signed the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, which came into force in 1976. A list of the committee's written questions has been submitted to the government, and includes reference to allegations of a "shoot to kill" policy in the province.

Pact's last pos

London - The unified military command of the Warsaw Pact was formally dissolved yesterday when the Soviet Union, who led the alliance, ceased to exercise their authority. Bulgarian general, M General Penko Kostadinov said that the military alliance had in fact served a valuable purpose.

Ransom demand

Catbath - Kidnappers French priest in the south Philippines demanded 10 million pesos (\$200,000) for release and said that would kill him if he launched a rescue operation. Church sources said. Bishop Philip Smith said the priest would not pay the ransom. Father Yves Caroff. (Re)

Peking wooed

Peking - Aleksandr Bessmyk, the Soviet foreign minister, arrived here last night in a series of S visitors who have on Peking since the Gulf (Catherine Sampson writes). He will smooth the way Jiang Zemin, China's leader, who visits Moscow next month.

Shopping spree

Sofia - Bulgarians with cars and marks flock hard-currency shops to goods before the government outlaws spending with things other than the currency. Panic buying queues marked the day before the government takes effect. (Reuter)

Sioux dance dangerously with wolves of waste disposal trade

From SAM KILEY IN LOS ANGELES

KEVIN Costner's film, *Dances with Wolves*, won seven Oscars for the accuracy with which it recreated the idyllic, pastoral world of the Lakota Sioux Indians. But life today on the Indian reservations is quite different.

Alcoholism is rife, and at the Pine Ridge reservation in western South Dakota a quarter of babies are born with delirium tremens, caused by mothers with drinking problems, and are likely to suffer learning disabilities. Other statistics paint an even grimmer picture. A child is 50 per cent more likely to die in Pine Ridge than in Bulgaria, Cuba or Costa Rica. The incidence of diabetes is five times

and the suicide rate double, the national average. Like most Indian tribes in the United States, they face unemployment, exploitation by toxic-waste dumpers, and the extinction of their bloodlines. In Pine Ridge, 85 per cent of adults are unemployed. The national figure for Indians is 35 per cent compared with about 6 per cent among all Americans. George Miller, the congressional representative and chairman of the House interior and insular affairs committee which oversees Indian affairs, says 45 per cent of America's 1.7 million Indians are on the breadline and only 43 per cent graduate from high school.

In an effort to try to control their destiny, seven tribes, including the Sioux, negotiated self-governing pacts with Washington last year. They now run their own budgets and lay down most of their laws, ironically clearing the way for waste-processing companies to exploit less stringent environmental laws in the reservations which can often charge millions of dollars to allow dumping.

Now derided as "dances with garbage", the Campo Indians in southern California have signed a contract for a 600-acre landfill. The Kaws of Oklahoma have similar plans, while the Mohawks in New York state are in the middle of a long-running dispute with General Motors and other industrial giants over pollution in the St Lawrence river which is sacred to them.

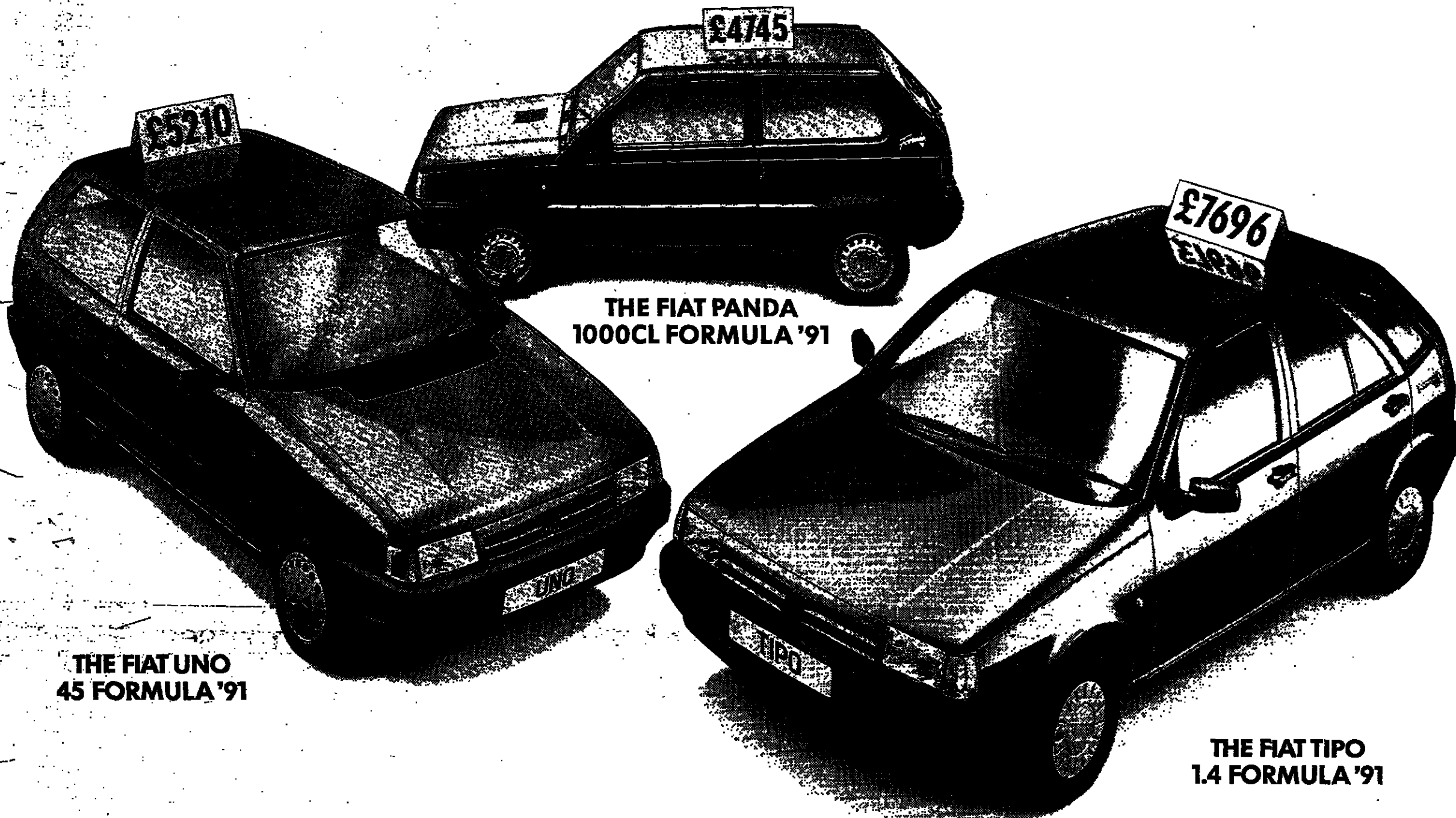
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The return of 1.7 million acres of some of the most beautiful farmland in America is probably a pipe-dream for the Sioux, who scrape a living from the near-sterile alkaline soil of the badlands. But they still intend taking their fight to Congress in the hope of overturning the Supreme Court's compensation decision. Mr Between Lodges said that the reservation faced the struggle of freeing themselves from depen-

dence on America. "They made need them so that we cannot be ourselves anymore," the four marine, aged 47, said in a repeated mantra among American Indians who are the most self-dependent section of society.

The extras who worked *Dances with Wolves* were paid \$ a day, which is \$20 above the usual rate, to dress in authentic costumes and live in tepees. reality, most live in shanties a disused caravans. Mr Between Lodges said: "Until 13 years ago many of our most sacred ceremonies were banned. I wonder we will ever recover from the past 100 years. Perhaps a film will help other people to us."

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Who will best care for the countryside?

John Gummer: farmers first

Britain has led the way in conservation

Farmers are the servants of that great majority of the population that does not live in our rural areas. They produce the food and look after the land. But those who live in towns and suburbs pay the taxes and prices which make farming possible, and want access to farmland, to walk and watch birds, to ride and to relax. The needs of the consumer have to come first, yet only countrymen can be trusted with the countryside: so the farming community must be given the means to do so.

When the West was short of food, few people objected to subsidy for agriculture. Europe's experience of starvation and Britain's need to close the dollar gap ensured all-party support for agriculture. But today, full stomachs have led to the demand that farming stand on its feet, like any other industry.

At the same time, an awareness of the importance of the environment means that the larger fields, new techniques, herbicides and fertilisers which brought us self-sufficiency are now disowned by many and the farmer is blamed for his very success.

No wonder that he feels battered on every side. In a world of surplus his income has been severely reduced. Concern for the environment and food safety has meant ever more stringent and expensive regulation. The campaigns of vociferous groups seem to make the farmer a target for blame. There is a feeling in the countryside that urban Britain has abandoned agriculture.

Yet farming's support system — the common agricultural policy (CAP) — will, on present figures, cost £23 billion this year, nearly 30 per cent more than last year. The distortion of markets, the building of food mountains, the waste and fraud continue apace. The taxpayer and the consumer are paying a high price and getting little satisfaction.

That is why the CAP must be adapted to a world of surplus, in which the farmer's role as guardian of the countryside takes on new significance. The environment must be the prime consideration. Support through payments linked to production must fall, and there must be more emphasis on direct payments for the custody of the countryside. Britain has been the leader in this change. Our schemes for environmentally sensitive areas set the pattern for Europe, as have our encouragement of farm woodlands and broadleaf planting, our establishment of nitrate-sensitive areas, our aid for diversification and our support for organic farming. All these have set the standards for the EC. Yet they are only a beginning. Such schemes are paid for from the 18 per cent or so of my agricultural budget run from

Westminster. They are bound to be mere tokens, for Brussels controls more than 80 per cent of the budget and uses it largely to finance production-based payments. Our aim must be to make environmental concerns central to reform of the CAP.

We must also begin to bring agricultural prices up to a more realistic level. Europe, America, and Japan support production so heavily that prices of many products bear no relation to reality. A successful round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade talks would enable all countries to reduce price support in concert, and Britain's share of the export market would not be damaged.

Milk quotas also need to be reduced by up to 5 per cent across the EC, and we must have an effective environmental scheme for livestock, and a greener set-aside system that overcomes the major objections to the present programme. We need minimum targets for each EC country, so that each bears a fair share of the burden. Britain will insist on a set-aside scheme for the environment, using the need to reduce surpluses as a means of enhancing the countryside. The farmer will then be seen for what he is — a grass-roots conservationist as well as a producer of food. He can do neither unless he earns enough to pay his way.

That does not mean we can return to the old certainties, which derived from a world of shortage. Farmers will have to be closer to the marketplace. They will need to be more willing to accept the needs of their customers — not least the supermarkets — both here and in the rest of Europe. But they will do so in the knowledge that they are valued and paid, not only for the food produced but for the countryside for which they care.



'Britain's aim must be to make green issues central to reform of the CAP'

THE countryside is changing. As reform of the wasteful system of subsidising farmers to add to Europe's grain mountains and milk lakes gets under way, much less farmland will be needed.

How should it be used? Do we want to open up more countryside to ramblers? Should the priority be to preserve particular types of countryside, such as the fast-disappearing chalk downs, or to create habitats for endangered wildlife? Or should we multiply our golf courses and clay pigeon shooting ranges? Above all, can we trust the farmers to make the right choices for us?

Three views are set out here. John Gummer, the Minister of Agriculture, believes only countrymen can be trusted with the countryside. He is confident that

farmers, prodded by a judicious blend of market forces and taxpayers' subsidy, will make a living for themselves while producing the environment we want.

Simon Gourlay believes the interests of farmers and consumers, taxpayers and conservationists are not irreconcilable given goodwill. However, he warns his fellow farmers against relying too heavily on the government purse.

Marion Shoard argues that farmers, who are responsible for destroying our hedges, rows, meadows and downs, must not be left to look after the countryside or compensated. Taking the example of how towns and cities have been controlled, she suggests how redundant farmland might be transferred to bodies such as the National Trust, or wildlife groups.



The Welsh Borders, reclaimed from neglect and intensively farmed. What of the future?

Given goodwill, we can strike the right balance

Simon Gourlay: let all cooperate

As a boy I used to ride through the land I now farm in the Welsh Borders. Not from a farming family but already enthusiastic about farming, I remember thinking that the unfenced, rabbit-ridden, bracken-infested land would yield a wonderful seed potato crop.

About 20 years later it did. That bit of countryside had changed, but it had done so many times before. When reclaiming those fields we found evidence of a prosperous period of intensive agriculture about the middle of last century. The return to a wilder state must have happened shortly after the first world war.

The Welsh Borders remain quite wild and still beautiful country. From our 1,300 ft hilltop, one can

see some 80 miles, from the Brecon Beacons to the south to the Wye in the north. Anyone who knew that country 50 years ago would see great changes, but whether for better or worse depends on one's point of view. The beauty of the countryside is highly subjective.

In her book *The Theft of the Countryside*, Marion Shoard includes a picture of an overgrown hedge harbouring net-les (but not capable of constraining stock), and implies that this is how things should be. It is not the way they were meant to be when the hedge was planted 200 or 300



'The farmer can keep his land beautiful and give good value'

years ago. To me this represents neglect; a feature introduced by man but no longer cared for. Farmers and public alike have a shared interest in conserving the countryside. Government, too,

has a crucial role, but has only made a hesitant start. The arable land set-aside scheme is ineffective as a conservation measure, and costs even more than export subsidies. After three years it will have cut EC production by less than 2 per cent, when the surplus is about 20 per cent. Extensification — lower input farming that encourages lighter grazing and reduced use of fertilisers —

is in its infancy but seems a more promising way of integrating countryside and farming policies. It opens the way for direct payments to farmers for positive countryside management. Agricultural support

in Britain costs more than £2 billion, while funding for countryside improvement programmes is £50 million. But the farmer should not rely on taxpayer support, which is so vulnerable to changing political whim.

I believe rapid progress can be made, because the interest groups need not be incompatible. Farmers need not produce surpluses; they can maintain a beautiful countryside while continuing to give good value to the consumer. The need for agricultural reform provides an opportunity to strike a sustainable balance. We must use the technology, finance and goodwill that are now available to do so. Sir Simon Gourlay was until recently president of the National Farmers' Union.

Marion Shoard: a life in clover

Controls now, then let market forces rule

THE future of our countryside hangs in the balance, as agriculture declines in the lowlands, afforestation threatens the uplands and recreation pressures increase. Half a century ago, our urban environment faced similar formidable challenges, which were met with a forceful and ultimately effective response. A similarly thorough approach is now needed to cope with the emergency in the countryside.

In the 1930s, environmental abuse was manifested in rashes of seaside bungalows and sprawling, unspeaking towns. Thus Winston Churchill and Sir John (later Lord) Reith, his minister of works, set up what became known as the Uthwatt committee, the deliberations of which led to the town planning legislation of 1947 which stemmed the sort of urban sprawl that has defiled America. The Uthwatt committee decided that attempts to control building development had foundered because local authorities wishing to stop schemes had to pay compensation to the landowners involved.

It concluded that the demand for a satisfactory built environment could not be reconciled with the property rights of the owners of urban land. The committee decided that these rights should be curtailed to the extent that development judged contrary to the public interest should be blocked without compensation.

In our own time, the march of the cereal prairies and conifer afforestation have been the equivalent of that urban sprawl. People today are no more prepared to put up with the debasement of their countryside than were their grandparents of their towns. They know they do not need to: at least the stampeding suburbs of the 1930s provided homes; much of the 80 per cent of our land surface now

hogged by agriculture is merely adding to expensive stockpiles of surplus food.

The decline of agriculture ought to provide plenty of scope for the conservation and reconstitution of our landscape and wildlife, and for the provision of rural recreation for a leisured and mobile population clamouring to walk, ride, climb, picnic and birdwatch.

A successful transfer of land use from farming to conservation and recreation could be achieved by a combination of the free play of market forces and measures similar to those that have controlled development in towns and cities since 1947. The European Community is starting to cut subsidies for food production, and, if we allow the logic of this to work through, the price of land on which agriculture ceases to be viable would fall to a level at which much of it would come within the reach of wildlife organisations, the National Trust, recreation entrepreneurs and local authorities seeking to provide leisure facilities. So long as strengthened planning machinery protects the public interest, the countryside that most of us want could be ours.

The present government is not addressing the nation's needs as Uthwatt did. Instead it is sustaining and appeasing the incumbent owners of land, as Uthwatt refused to. Farmers want to keep control of the countryside and make up for lost income from agriculture by meeting some of society's new requirements — a sideline to their existing activities — in return for compensation. Scheme after scheme now pour out of Whitehall based on this approach, while hitherto small scale schemes, such as set-aside (which pays farmers to leave land fallow) or encouraging wildlife on farms (which the public walk on fields which they have already been paid not to farm) are being expanded.

As programmes like these attract greater expectations, their limitations will become apparent. The present agreements are for limited terms. As they come up for renewal, the cost of the whole approach will become prohibitive. Once farmers exhaust the public purse, they will seek other ways to make up their income. We can expect to see production methods that are more, not less, intensive further disruptive but profitable sidelines such as clay-pigeon shooting and war-gaming, even charge for walkers. There is a role for public funds in shaping the countryside we want but money must be carefully targeted. This is not the same as maintaining all our existing farmers with public money in return for concessions on their terms. Uthwatt, please come back.

Marion Shoard is author of *The Land is Our Land* (Grafton).

...and moreover

MATTHEW PARRIS

A kind friend has built me a bird table and placed it outside the kitchen window at my house in Derbyshire, for a surprise. I found it on return from Scotland. I should be grateful, but something is troubling me.

It is not that the bird table is unappealing. As bird tables go, it is a fine structure, taking the form of a tiny wooden shelter, like Snoopy's kennel, perched on a pole and stuck into the ground. It is quite sweet. Perhaps, then, you think I am worried that it looks suburban? Not at all. Of course it looks suburban, but I always try to be suburban when I am in the country. Nothing is more absurd than town people wandering around in what they take to be the accoutrements of country living: those silly boots, dunt-coloured trousers, quilted jackets, and ridiculous hats. I make a point of wearing British Home Stores Sta-Pressed slacks and cardigans and have fitted a ding dong chime to my front door.

What, then, is troubling me about my bird table? Whatever it is, it certainly does not trouble the birds. The birds are impressed. My friend left a pile of breadcrumbs on the platform so that I should at once be able to see my feeding centre in action. It was an impressive sight. Being no bird-watcher I am unable to distinguish one small bird from another and so cannot tell you the breeds, or whatever it is we call the subdivisions of the bird world: but, as I watch, all shapes and sizes arrive and

depart and there is a great babel of cheeping in a variety of tweets. One I do recognise from the Christmas cards, however, as a robin.

So how can I explain? Ah, well here goes...

Bird tables are objectionable to me on ideological grounds. To us Thatcherites there is no such thing as a free crumb. For many, perhaps, the sight of those little birds pecking away at the rations laid out on my table might be heart-warming. To me it is creeping socialism.

Why can't they find their own food? I realise the bread crumbs are surplus to my own requirements, but that is not the point. As I watch, these birds are getting into the habit of thinking that the world owes them a living, that there will always be breadcrumbs free at the point of delivery: that such things can be provided without cost, that my bird table offers a guaranteed meal ticket for life.

There is a whole world out there for the birds to hunt in for their living. There are worms, but they have to be dug, there are seeds, but they have to be searched for, there are flies, but they must be caught on the wing. All this takes effort and ingenuity and I realise that some birds will be more successful at it than others. But that's life. That's what we are put on this earth to do: struggle, bring home the beetles, feather our nests. Competition must, in the final analysis, lie at the heart of all natural life, for there cannot be enough worms for an infinitely

expanding bird population, and some birds must die.

And that's what's so wrong about bird tables. They distort the process of natural selection. In a world with many such tables, lazy birds, incompetent birds, inferior birds do as well as lean, fit, enterprising birds, the underserving breed as prodigiously as the deserving, and the species is not improved. Moreover, the prudent and hard-working bird must begin to ask itself "Why bother?" If there will always be bread on the bird table, why teach your fledglings to fly higher, search longer and peck harder? The whole thing becomes a sort of feathered welfare state.

And as I type this I grow angry, at the cheeping from the table outside. It is the cheeping of mendicants. Hell, the sun is shining, the grass is growing and for miles I can see nothing but green hills, fields and woods. Worms are stirring, the world is waiting and those birds should be out there competing in it, not scrounging like airborne dozers at my kitchen window. It breeds the mentality of the open beach.

So this is my decision. I shall keep the bird table. The bird table is safe in my hands. But only for emergency rations. At my table, social provision will be there as a safety net for freak weather conditions. Crumb deliveries will be triggered whenever the government's cold weather payments for pensioners are triggered. At other times, the table will be bare. On your bikes.

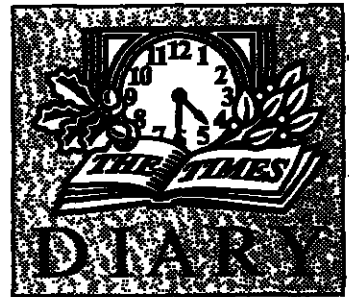
Torpedoed by their own side

THE traditional Easter Monday march by CND, this year not to Aldermaston but to Barrow-in-Furness, looks like being anything but peaceful. A split has emerged involving many of the trade unionists and Labour candidates who formerly supported the ban-the-bomb campaign. The anger seems certain to spill over when the estimated 2,000 marchers arrive in Barrow, where the Vickers shipyard is building Trident nuclear submarines. Last week, Vickers announced that over the next five years it will cut its 12,500 workforce by almost a half, and



yesterday trade union officials and Labour leaders in the town made a last-minute appeal to the organisers to cancel the anti-Trident demonstration. "CND is kicking the people of Barrow when they are down," says Frank Ward, Barrow district secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union. "Without Trident this town is dead."

CND, which is losing members at such a rate that it's closing its loss-making monthly magazine, *Sanity*, has conceded one point to the opponents of the march. The



slogan under which protesters will rally has been changed from "Turn from Trident: build a future" to "For Barrow's sake work for peace". Marjorie Thompson, the CND leader, says: "We are not demonstrating against the people of Barrow. We cannot abandon our opposition to Trident."

John Hutton, Labour's prospective parliamentary candidate in the town, yesterday added his voice to those demanding that the march be abandoned. "This is neither the time nor the place for the march."

But Hutton's words have not been echoed by the Labour-controlled Barrow council. Not only has it failed to enter a word of protest against the march but is waiving the usual £385 fee for using Barrow Park.

Autumn shades

Security guards at the South Bank's Hayward gallery should think twice before evicting anyone found sleeping on the floor when its Toulouse-Lautrec exhibition opens this autumn. The recumbent figure might not be a down-and-out from cardboard city just up the road but the ghost of the artist himself. When the artist's first London exhibition opened, at the Goupie gallery in Regent Street almost 100 years ago, it was a near disaster. *The Times* did not consider it worth a review and *The Art Journal* wrote censoriously: "Not

to be recommended for old ladies." There were so few visitors that the French artist regularly took a nap on the gallery floor in the afternoon, knowing that he was unlikely to be disturbed. One afternoon a visitor did turn up — an important one at that. The gallery owner offered to wake him, but the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, insisted that a great artist needed his sleep.

● The Guinness Book of Records is in danger of getting staid. The new records just accepted include a Mexican baker who has produced the world's longest loaf (1,064 metres), a 262 lb watermelon from Tennessee and a New York man who walked 438 miles balancing a milk bottle on his head. British records include the highest free-standing scaffolding, around the Albert Memorial in London. But it makes one long for the days before the book got respectable and banned those glorious records for such exploits as swallowing live worms. Those, as Roald Dahl knew, were what made it such a hit with the kids.

Out in the cold

THE poll tax is about to claim another victim. Nigel Evans, the hapless Tory candidate in the Ribbles Valley by-election, can hardly be held responsible for the loss of a previously safe seat, but Conservatives are an unforgiving lot. Moves are afoot to ensure that Evans will not be the man who tries to win the seat back from the Liberal Democrats' Mike Carr at the general election.

A decision will be taken at the association's annual meeting later this month, says Pamela Roberts, the Tory agent. "Nigel Evans is not automatically the candidate. People in the association are frightfully upset. They expected to hold the seat."

Evans, a Welshman, is accepted

by most to have fought a excellent campaign against the odds, but his lack of local not counting against him. Might he seek the nomination at Mor most, where another difficult election is in the offing following the death of Sir John Stradling Thomas? Or would that be tempting fate too far?

Sixes and sevens

A reunion dinner for Birmingham's West Midlands police is only a month after the freeing of the Birmingham Six, has been cancelled. About 300 former squad members and their families, including businessmen and figures, had paid £18 a head for dinner at Birmingham's Grosvenor Hotel on April 12.

So soon after the Birmingham Six case, it would have been insensitive to go ahead, despite the fact that the dinner would have raised £1,000 for charity. One former squad officer. In February, Paul Leopold, deputy chief constable of the West Midlands police, who retired at weekend after 40 years' service, appealed to the organisers to cut the event on the grounds that it would be "counter-productive". They responded defiantly by saying: "We shall go ahead. It is a private function." Their aim appears to have been changed by the fact that a report on the 25 officers who investigated the Birmingham Six case — many of them men of the serious crime squad — about to be sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

● Brent library service in London is running an annual return of stolen — books. To date, have been returned, dating back as 1973. Those returned during the last seven days a week, included a volume of *Handbook for Church Wardens*.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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NUT'S DEATH WISH

The National Union of Teachers seems incapable of learning its lessons. Strikehappy in the 1980s, it damaged not only itself (which matters little) but the teaching profession (which matters greatly) and pupils (who matter most). Now it is acting true to form in calling for a strike in support of national pay bargaining and for a boycott of primary school testing next term. The action could be a godsend to the government, rescuing it from a political corner over poll tax replacement.

The government is still being pressed by backbenchers to transfer the whole of the local education budget away from local authorities to Whitehall. The switch, it has been estimated, would reduce the amount to be raised by local taxation by some £5 billion. The central funding and self-administration of primary and secondary schools — "opting out" — would become the rule rather than the exception. This would leave little or nothing for local education authorities (LEAs) to do, creating a perfect excuse for abolishing them. The NUT and its members are not likely to enjoy Whitehall control, but that could be where their action leads them.

As for restoring teachers' national negotiation machinery, the bill to do this has been stuck in the Commons for some weeks, awaiting its third reading. There is no obvious explanation for the delay other than that, since February when ministers were saying they wanted the bill passed by Easter, local authority management of schools has been sucked into the poll tax debate. The NUT's decision yesterday to strike if the negotiating machinery in the bill is not restored soon is, however, probably the most effective way of ensuring that it is never unstick.

NUT militancy was the primary reason why the government suspended national negotiations with the teachers' unions in 1987. The case for restoring negotiations was partly that the membership of the NUT had shrunk since then, allowing greater weight to be given to other more sensible unions, and partly that the NUT seemed to have

acquired a more responsible leadership. But if the NUT is returning to its old ways the case for a bill handing back its negotiating rights is undermined. And if there are no national negotiations there is less reason to keep LEAs as intermediate bodies representing the employers' interests.

Had some LEAs decided to boycott the national testing of pupils now required by law, the government would have been handed another weapon against them. But the LEAs have agreed to comply. The next best thing for the government's purposes is an unlawful teachers' boycott of testing, which LEAs, or at least those under Labour control, fail to stamp on.

Though Jack Straw, the Opposition's education spokesman, was prompt to tell teachers the law must be obeyed, blind eyes will undoubtedly be turned on the boycotting teachers in the remaining left-controlled authorities. The government will then be able to argue that too many LEAs have become just a front for special interests such as the NUT — witness their condoning of its unlawful behaviour. For the sake of parents and pupils, ministers will be able to say, education must be removed from the LEAs.

The NUT therefore presents the government with an almost irresistible temptation to get rid of the LEAs. But ministers must resist, all the same. The local financing and control of education is part of the natural subject matter of local democracy, to which the government says it is committed.

There is a much better alternative to restoring national negotiations for teachers, one which would clip the wings of the NUT's militant and unrepresentative national leadership and at the same time would bolster local democracy. Pay and terms of employment of those they employ should be left to LEAs to determine, as they think fit. And if teachers break their terms of employment, for instance by boycotting the pupil testing required by law, their LEA should sack them. That would show that local government need not be weak government, and that LEAs have understood that governing is about choosing.

UKRAINIAN EASTER

Cardinal Myroslav Lubachivsky celebrated Easter this year in St George's cathedral, Lvov. His return marks the resurrection of the Uniate Catholic Church of the Ukraine. For many years the cardinal had watched from exile while his clergy were harassed by the KGB. This was only one aspect of a more general persecution of one of Europe's largest but least regarded nations. This persecution is a good time for Christians to like their limbo: the Ukrainians' stations of the Cross. The origins of the Uniate church reach back 400 years, to an attempt to end the Great Schism between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Under the Union of 1596, the "Greek-Catholics" of the Ukraine sought other ways to owe allegiance to Rome rather than to the patriarchate of Moscow. In production methods they were allowed to keep their own, but in religious rites and traditions, some of which (such as married clergy) were prohibited to Catholics of the Latin rite.

Metropolitan Sheptytsky, Uniate primate from 1900 to 1944, became a focus of Ukrainian nationalism. That first bore fruit in 1918, when a short-lived Ukrainian state was imposed on Soviet Russia by the Germans. The mainly Orthodox central and eastern Ukraine was reconquered in the civil war by the Red Army. Catholic western Ukraine came under Polish rule, which was harsh enough. But Soviet Ukrainians fared incomparably worse. The Ukrainian famine, which Stalin deliberately created by cutting off food supplies, killed up to a third of the population. It ranks among the worst crimes of the 20th century.

Not content with starvation, Stalin proceeded to terrorise the Ukrainian intelligentsia. When the Germans invaded Poland, Stalin helped himself to western Ukraine, and more executions and deportations followed. When the Germans invaded in 1941, many Ukrainians welcomed them; but the Nazi regime proved no less vicious than the Soviet one. The Jews were murdered, with the help of a pro-Nazi Ukrainian

minority. When the Russians returned, they treated the whole population — not just the few who had fought for Hitler — as traitors.

After Stalin had annexed the western Ukraine, the Uniate Catholics were dispersed by a council of guiding priests who met in Lvov in 1946. Clergy who remained loyal to Rome were killed, tortured, imprisoned or exiled. Their churches were handed over to the Orthodox patriarchate. No religious institution would be permitted that could serve as a political rallying point. But religious persecution has, of course, provoked political resistance. The rise since 1988 of the Ukrainian nationalist party, Rukh, confounded the Kremlin.

Now President Gorbachev is reaping the whirlwind sown by Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev. His referendum showed that support even for a looser federal union is weaker among Ukrainians than in any other Soviet republic. Hence, perhaps, Mr Gorbachev's long hesitation before granting recognition to the Catholics. His visit to the Vatican in December 1989 may not have been the catalyst: Uniate congregations had first been allowed to register a few days before the Soviet leader met the Pope.

But John Paul II deserves credit for the shift in Kremlin policy towards neutrality between the different Ukrainian religious traditions. That shift should continue with the return of many more of the Uniate churches which were confiscated in 1946.

A papal nuncio was present at Lvov yesterday, but relations with Rome are cool. Suspicion of the Polish Pope's intentions is strong among the elderly Uniate hierarchy. Uniate Catholicism will face competition for believers not only from Russian Orthodoxy, but also from the Moscow patriarchate's newly legalised rival, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. If the Ukrainian Catholics are to become a bridge between Eastern and Western Christianity, the Uniate church and the Vatican will need infinite patience.

MUCKING ABOUT IN BOATS

Ever since 1829, when W. Snow of St John's, Cambridge wrote to T. Staniforth of Christ Church, Oxford, proposing that the universities "row a match at or near London each in an eight-oared boat", the Boat Race has been going to the dogs. Whereas the first race was rowed in the sylvan setting of Henley, it was moved to the Thames tideway, whose ghastly mudbanks make it an unsuitable course for a serious sporting contest.

In the years that followed, the protagonists stopped at nothing in the quest for victory. In 1842, F.N. Menzies, the Oxford president, unsparingly introduced the long winging stroke in place of the digging stroke of the watermen previously used, and won by six lengths. In 1849, an Oxford foul on Cambridge led to a coolness between the clubs. In 1861 the severe discipline imposed by the Oxford president, G. Morrison, was followed ill by Cambridge until Morrison became the first turncoat and joined Cambridge as coach in 1870. Both academics cheated simultaneously in 1873 by introducing sliding seats.

The rot has gone on. Among more recent developments have been Oxford's unattractive adoption of the American rig in 1957, followed by both sides' even more patriotic adoption of the American scullman. Money has increasingly exercised a corrupting influence, with boats now costing ten times as many pounds as crews

weigh. The sponsorship of Beefeater Gin (of which many spectators on Saturday appeared to have partaken liberally) has been necessary to ensure viability.

The inconvenience of having to choose young undergraduates has been overcome with increasing ingenuity, so that Donald MacDonald was able to enjoy his 1987 triumph at the ripe old age of 31. Oarsmen transfer with the insouciance of football players. Hence Richard Young, the Oxford bow, ended up on Saturday grinding his colleague in last year's Cambridge boat, Richard Staite, into the river. Nor, in truth, can it be claimed that every denizen of the two boats has owed his university place entirely to his academic ability.

This long history of decline does not, of course, excuse Oxford's singularly ungracious display in victory on Saturday. Joe Michels, the Oxonian No 2, should not have yelled "See you at the finish" to Max Justice, the Cantab No 3; Rupert Obholzer, the Yeti-looking who stroked Oxford, should have resisted his post-race angry gesticulations. In the light of such abuses, the race will have to be rethought. Tradition be damned: perhaps Cambridge's challenge next year should be to an Oxford (or London) crew of testotolers with independently attested prospects of first-class honours in moral theology; and should take place between coracles on the Serpentine.

Film industry in need of help

From the Director of the National Campaign for the Arts

Sir, William Cash's article on British film, "An industry in want of a new script" (March 23), said that it "can be an excellent cultural export and it is only right that tax incentives should be introduced to put the British film industry on an equal footing with other countries".

That is a point conceded in principle by Mrs Thatcher last year and sidestepped by the Chancellor last week, no doubt on the advice of the Treasury, which dislikes the inconvenient truth that different industries require different sorts of help.

Mr Cash's point was that the British film industry will not get back to its 1950s size — let alone that of Hollywood — unless it makes films of limited appeal. This is of course perfectly fair. But it fails to take account of the reason why Britain has only been catering for the more "literary" end of the market; that the only consistent investor with a coherent policy has been Channel 4, which has kept the industry alive but which, quite rightly, has a brief to commission work that would not normally be regarded as populist.

Ask any of the fine British directors now in America why they are working for Hollywood, not Pinewood, and the answer will be the same. Whether it be *Top Gun* or *Dances with Wolves*, the City will not invest without some sort of incentive. That leaves the choice: make cheap films for a specialist market, work for television or leave the country.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON MUNDY, Director,
National Campaign for the Arts,
Francis House, Francis Street, SW1.
March 23.

From Mr James Quinn

Sir, Mr Cash's plea for tax incentives for the British film industry is fully justified. However, contrary to his view that "a few extra million pounds is not going to make the slightest difference" I believe that such a modest if continuing subsidy would provide the moral as well as material stimulus which is so badly needed by British film-makers.

And, it is not too early to dismiss as unrealistic the idea of a new and fruitful form of cooperation between this country and our European neighbours. I understand that David Putnam, the producer (not director) of *Mr Cash*, has recently finished a film in Paris within this kind of framework. Its reception in due course, in financial and cultural terms, might be a helpful pointer to the future.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES QUINN,
Crescent Cottage,
108 Marine Parade,
Brighton, East Sussex.
March 26.

Poll-tax puzzle

From Councillor A. John Clare

Sir, Professor Higgins's suggestion (March 23) of sending out an addendum note telling people to deduct £140 from community charge forms in the light of the rebate is a simple and elegant solution, and it could even be legal, but the letter would have to be a little longer I'm afraid, something like:

"If you are part of the small minority who pay your community charge in full and in one payment, please deduct £140.
"If you pay by instalments, do not pay anything until July, then, instead of last year's ten instalments, please pay time (there will only be nine months left in the year). If the amount is not exactly divisible by nine, please add one penny per month to as many instalments as is necessary.
"If your circumstances entitle you to transitional relief, please calculate your new relief on the basis of the community charge being £140 less

and taking into account the method of calculation shown in the enclosed booklet No 1. If you are entitled to a rebate, please calculate the proportion of community charge relief to which you are entitled and reduce the £140 in proportion — enclosed large booklet No 2 may help.

Yours sincerely,
A. JOHN CLARE
(Chairman, Kingston and Sutton Joint Computer Committee),
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames,
Guildhall, Kingston upon Thames,
Surrey.
March 25.

Wilding recalled

From Mr G. Gneditch

Sir, Mr Pepper of the National Portrait Gallery, referring to the recent discovery of society photographs by Dorothy Wilding (report, March 23), says that "she has been completely forgotten".

Not so. Every stamp collector of Great Britain of the present reign will have started that collection with the 1953 "Wilding" definitive of the Queen — stamps which continued for nearly 20 years.

Yours faithfully,
G. GNEDITCH,
17 Albemarle,
Wimbledon Parkside, SW19.
March 24.

In the doghouse

From Dr R. K. Knight

Sir, How extraordinary to read that the Yorkshire terrier is now Britain's most popular pedigree dog (report, March 26).

Can it be that people are beguiled by the undoubted beauty of this little dog? Unless they have owned one before, they could hardly know that it is an example of canine hypomania: so highly-strung that, when excited, it is incontinent; thinks it is a Rottweiler and will attack anything that moves; and is the basiest thing on four legs.

Yours faithfully,
R. K. KNIGHT,
Double Dance,
Ighiteam,
Kent.
March 26.

Cutting loans to curtail house prices

From Mr David Hebdon

Sir, Mr Robin Leigh-Pemberton's suggestion that house-price inflation should be controlled by restriction on lending to purchasers (report, March 27) demonstrates his failure to understand the mechanisms at work in the property market.

The house-price inflation of recent years has been solely caused by a shortage in the supply of homes. The desire to own a home has, in the main, been artificially created by the destruction of the rented sector and the political wish to create a property-owning democracy. The public perception, almost Orwellian in its scope, is that all landlords are regarded as bad and that to rent a house is a sign of failure.

Interference with the property market by restricting the money supply is a crude and unfair method of control. Such restrictions prevent the free movement of people within the property market, cause grief and hardship, both financial and domestic, to those involved. It also seriously affects the profitability of the building industry, whose growth and well-being is essential to attacking the underlying problem, a shortage of affordable homes, built in places where people want to live.

All who wish to acquire a house at a reasonable price, those who want to move to a larger house to accommodate growing families and those who wish to scale down their housing at retirement have all been badly served by Leigh-Pemberton's ill-considered comments.

On the front page of the Business Section of today's *Times*, Barratt's the builders announced a loss of £14.5 million and Bass asks the market for £558 million. The Governor of the Bank of England tells Parliament that he would not oppose restriction on lending to house buyers and suggests changing the law retrospectively to allow banks to recover £500 million lost when the House of Lords ruled that interest swap deals with local authorities were unlawful.

If Barratt and Bass can look after themselves then so can the banks and the British public. Mr Leigh-

Pemberton has given us all enough advice and help — it's time for him to go.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID HEDDON,
(Thomas Cooper and Stubbard),
52 Leadenhall Street, EC3.
March 27.

From Mr Ted O'Toole

Sir, Now that the prospect of another bout of house-price escalation seriously threatens the government's hopes of falling inflation, the Governor of the Bank of England quite rightly calls for mortgage controls.

There is no need for innovation or original thought in this matter; a return to the earlier equitable principle of limiting mortgage repayments to a maximum of one-quarter of the gross income of the mortgagor would suffice.

At current interest rates this would generally limit mortgage advances to twice gross income. On this basis, when interest rates rise again (as they surely will) home owners will not be driven to dropping their house keys through the building society letter box.

Yours faithfully,
TED O'TOOLE,
54 Fleet Road, Fleet, Hampshire.
March 27.

From Mr Stanley Lerner

Sir, Would not a responsible method of restricting any future house-price spiral be to have a sliding scale of borrowings geared to the cost of the property?

This scale would mean that the more expensive properties would require that the purchasers utilise more of their own savings if they wish to move up market, and would possibly deter them from shopping around until they found a lender who would accede to their demands for what often turned out to be a 100 per cent loan.

Yours faithfully,
STANLEY LERNER,
Fairlands, 37 Hove Park Way,
Hove, Sussex.
March 28.

Assessment of pupils

From Dr C. J. Burgoyne

Sir, I have been watching with disbelief as my wife, a primary teacher, prepares for the assessment of her class to comply with the national curriculum.

The teacher has to devise tests, to be carried out with small groups, with careful monitoring of what the children achieve and how they do it. This has to be repeated with dozens of attainment targets, at several different levels, and it has to be done twice, once informally this term, and again next term. This contrasts with normal examinations, where only a random fraction of the syllabus is tested.

The tests are clearly designed to test the schools, not the children.

Parents will select schools for their children based on published results; this will be reflected in the income for the school. Good schools will thrive, others will not. So why make the actual tests public? Bad teachers will merely coach children for the tests.

The system is inefficient in resources, and false as a measure of quality. It diverts an enormous amount of the teacher's energy and initiative away from what they are trained to do, which is actually to teach.

The national curriculum itself is a good idea, but the assessment associated with it is pointless.

Yours sincerely,
C. J. BURGOYNE,
Emmanuel College, Cambridge.
March 20.

Help at hand

From Mr F. Harris

Sir, I read in your Diary today (March 25) an interesting report on the proposed visit of Sir John Harvey-Jones to Eastern Europe to combat inefficiency there in connection with his BBC2 *Troubleshooter* programme.

Below this is a paragraph on the experience of our Housing Minister, Sir George Young. Sir George, together with his wife Aurelia, bought a car which "they had carefully inspected on the forecourt" before driving it home and discovering that it was 6 in, too long for their garage.

Does this illustrate the limit of practical ability of our present government or is my advanced old age (86 years) expecting too much of our younger generation? Should not Sir John be given the opportunity to "troubleshoot" the present government members?

Yours faithfully,
F. HARRIS,
Luckett Lodge, 15 Blean Hill,
Blean, Nr Canterbury, Kent.

that the site will take, for the minimum cost, built in the shortest time. After all, their sole motivation for building is to make money.

The results are all around us: over-developed sites, inadequate infrastructure, shoddy materials, unresolved details and paltry landscaping.

If our prime concern is improving the quality of our environment, instead of subjecting Lord Palumbo to abuse, delay and expense, we should be asking ourselves how we can encourage more patronage such as his.

Yours etc,
ROGER FITZGERALD,
124 Peppys Road, SE14.
March 28.

Armoured rhino

From Mr John Chartres

Sir, Along with many other members of the 1st Armoured Division during World War II I have rejoiced in this formation's recent achievements in the Gulf war.

Also like many other old desert warriors, I have rejoiced in the way the phrase "The Desert Rats" has been used to inspire us all. I do remember, however, that in "my day" the only soldiers really entitled to call themselves "Desert Rats" and wear the jerrycan symbol were the members of the 7th Armoured Division. Quite rightly the present 7th Armoured Brigade is entitled to wear the little animal first supplied as a symbol by Sally, Duchess of Westminster to the embryo 7th Armoured Division in the Western Desert circa 1940.

But whatever happened to our white rhinoceros, the proud symbol of 1st Armoured Division, worn and flown at places like El Alamein, the Mareth Line and finally the Gothic Line in Italy? Could it be that our affectionate nickname for our symbol, "the pregnant pig", caused offence in certain quarters during the recent conflict? If so, now that it is all over could we old 1st Armoured Division hands have our rhinoceros back in public esteem, even if he (or, perhaps better, she) did tend to face backwards?

Yours sincerely,
JOHN CHARTRES,
Rivington Road,
Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071 782 5046).

Morale of NHS staff 'never lower'

From Sir Roy Calne and others

Sir, The morale of doctors and nurses trying to work in the acute services of the National Health Service has never been lower and some of us have lost confidence in the new attempts at management. At a time of increased public expectations for good health care, the already inadequate facilities are being arbitrarily cut in a desperate bid to balance the books in a system of accounting that is so confused that in a large general hospital no one has any idea what anything really costs.

In our hospital we are so short of acute surgical beds that frequently operations are cancelled and patients are scattered all over the hospital. The situation promises to get worse as a local RAF hospital which has previously treated civilians is closing and the acute facilities in another nearby hospital are being run down. To meet this crisis of an increasing burden on overstrained resources, the reaction of management is to close a surgical ward, similar to firefighters pouring petrol on a blaze.

The new government policy to cut waiting lists and waiting times to get on waiting lists is clearly impossible and in direct conflict with their financial stricture.

The aim of a "market" with contractual arrangements cannot work with phoney fiscal accounting where the cheapest "best buy" is encouraged, but instructions also insist that the current referral patterns should not be changed.

The BMA estimates that £80 million have been spent on new administration resulting in a horde of new "clipboard carriers" and much useless information stored in expensive systems with no benefit to the care of the sick.

We will have longer waiting lists and a poorer service with patients being forced into the private sector. The health service is heading for a disaster similar to that of the poll tax. Unless there is a rapid change of direction and increase in funding for patient care any remaining loyalty of the voters will be lost.

Yours faithfully,
ROY CALNE,
N. V. JAMIESON,
P. S. JOHNSTON
(Consultant Surgeons),
University of Cambridge
Clinical School,
Department of Surgery,
Addenbrooke's Hospital,
Hills Road,
Cambridge.
March 28.

Thinking of women

From Ms Jo Richardson, MP for Barking (Labour)

Sir, Your leading article of March 26, "Courtroom female votes", suggests that a woman in the cabinet would be more effective than a ministry for women. I would argue that we need both.

A woman in the cabinet is no guarantee that any account of women's needs will inform cabinet thinking — as 11 years of Mrs Thatcher's presence so amply demonstrates. A minister with the specific job of making sure all policy is considered for its effect on women as well as originating policy to be of direct benefit to women will make sure that women's needs are seriously considered by the cabinet.

There will be at least three women in Labour's first cabinet in addition to the women's minister: an increase of four in women's representation — currently zero.

Yours faithfully,
JO RICHARDSON
(Shadow Minister for Women),
House of Commons.
March 26.

From Mrs Diane Benussi

Sir, When my tyre deflated I telephoned the RAC and advised them that in view of my small stature I was unable to change the tyre on my car. Within 10 minutes rescue arrived.

The description on the computer screen read "little lone female". That description seems to be the price one pays for obtaining service. Feminist principles are out.

Yours faithfully,
DIANE P. BENUSSI,
Benussi & Powell (Solicitors),
9-11 Colshill Street,
Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands.
March 21.

From Mr David Gadsby

Sir, In your leader of March 26 you sensibly say that mobile telephones are a considerable boon to businessmen away from their desks, to husbands away from their wives and to single women stranded in their cars.

Are they not equally valuable to business women away from their desks, to wives away from their husbands and to single men who need to call their mothers?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GADSBY,
71 Manor Way, Blackheath, SE3.
March 27.

Appealing tribute

From Mr T. S. F. Norcliffe

Sir, On my 85th birthday recently I received an appeal from Help the Aged. After a bit of thought I decided to take it as a compliment.

Yours faithfully,
THOS. S. F. NORCLIFFE,
77 Rowton Grange Road,
Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire.
March 25.

Stretching to a fortune

Hilary Atkinson, a chicken farmer's wife and fitness enthusiast, is piling up the pounds with a strip of pink latex

HILARY Atkinson lives with her husband and children just outside Berkhamsted, not a spot you would expect to find the woman tipped to be the next health and fitness millionaire.

We have worked out with Fonda, shed those inches other diets leave behind with Conley and followed Pinckney's 30-day countdown to a beautiful body. Now here comes Mrs Atkinson, aged 43, with Dyna-Band and an even more beguiling promise — a fabulous figure in only ten minutes a day.

She saw her first Dyna-Band at a health club 14 months ago. An American girl was exercising a dislocated shoulder with a pink strip of rubber wedged into a door. Mrs Atkinson worked out with the resistant band, made in America, and found it tightened up the flabby bits. When she told her husband, Christopher, that she intended to market the band, he said: "It's only a piece of latex. Nobody's going to buy that."

Mrs Atkinson has worked all her life; her first husband was a poultry farmer, in a small way. "In the garage, actually. In those days supermarkets sold only frozen chickens. I stood outside giving away 10p-off vouchers on our chickens until the supermarkets said: 'OK, you win.'" By the time they parted 14 years later, it was a multi-million-pound business. Her second husband is also a poultry farmer, in a big way; Mrs Atkinson did the accounts and the selling, until Dyna-Band.

SHE tracked down the Ohio manufacturer, a surgical equipment company, and convinced it to give her the UK distributorship. Then Mrs Atkinson introduced the band into a local fitness class and bombarded her neighbours with leaflets urging them to join. The story was picked up by women's magazines.

The packaging of Dyna-Band is all sparky professionalism. At an early newspaper photograph session, Mrs Atkinson had taken the number of the model with the longest legs and loveliest smile. The model recommended her favourite photographer, he produced the printer. Mrs Atkinson wrote the instruction leaflet "so that I could understand it".

She sold mail orders through magazines articles, following up each sale with a telephone call, which produced successful case histories

and more business. "You're just wasting time and money, ringing up all those people," her husband said. Stores starting ordering Dyna-Band.

Mrs Atkinson bought the latex in bulk rolls and she and her 14-year-old daughter cut and printed each band on the kitchen table. Her mother came down from Sheffield to cook and look after the house. Her two sons fetched, carried and collected. Her older daughter went on an exercise training course, so she could give Dyna-Band lessons, and met Andrée Deane, a fitness teacher who worked out exercises for a book.

The Dyna-Band Challenge is to be published this week (by Ebury Press, £7.99), along with a video. With nothing but £2,000 she was once awarded in compensation after a car accident, Mrs Atkinson has personally shifted 200,000 Dyna-Band packs.

The American manufacturer is impressed; the company, which has never managed to get the product into a retail outlet, has now asked Mrs Atkinson to market the Dyna-Band worldwide.

SHIRLEY LOWE

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Hilary Atkinson works out with the Dyna-Band

Teachers show their militant face at Easter



But the rest of the year their unions compete for members by offering insurance, legal advice and 'freebies'. This week The TES investigates.

TES

THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

Perspectives of Winston



The fourth book by Martin Gilbert (above) on Churchill includes his first record of the early years. Does it differ from the story told by Sir Winston's son, Randolph? George Hill reports

Coming round the same circuit for the fourth time, anyone might be forgiven for casting a slightly jaundiced eye at the familiar view. With Martin Gilbert, not a bit of it. Next week his one-volume life of Sir Winston Churchill will be published, a distillation of nearly 30 years' labours into a mere 1,000 pages. It is the fourth time he has told the story, but he plainly finds it as fresh and romantic as ever.

His eighth and final volume of the official life of Churchill, the most comprehensive political biography of the century, appeared in 1985. The companion notes and documents run to 13 volumes already, though it has reached only 1939.

The new version contains much new material. Churchill's life story has not ceased to develop merely because its protagonist has been dead for a quarter of a century. New information and new insights continue to come to light.

This is the first time Dr Gilbert has covered the first part of the story, corresponding to the first two volumes of the eight-volume life. Volumes one and two were written by Churchill's son, Randolph. Dr Gilbert, who had been Randolph's research assistant since 1962, took over the task after his death in 1968.

The biography had been a labour of love for Randolph Churchill. His devotion to his father was strong, and in undertaking to chronicle his life he was following in his father's footsteps. In 1906 Winston Churchill had written a two-volume life defending the memory of his own father, Lord Randolph Churchill, the tragic firebrand of late Victorian politics. Lord Randolph died at 46, almost certainly from syphilis, and he was a negligent and irascible father.

A son is not necessarily a father's ideal biographer. He is likely to be too close emotionally to his subject, blinkered either by family piety or by Oedipal resentments, but it is to Randolph's credit that the story told by Dr Gilbert is substantially the same as the one that he told. Dr Gilbert's perspective is wider and it is better structured, but no skeletons have been uncovered.

"Randolph was never constrained very much by family piety," Dr Gilbert says. "He did not identify Lord Randolph's illness in the book, but the letter from Lord Randolph's doctor that named it did not come to light until 1967, when it was too late to put it into the relevant volume. But he printed the text in the companion volume, which was published later."

Churchill never knew how his father died. He was haunted for years by the fear that he was fated by

heredity to die young, and driven on by the belief that he might not have much time to fulfil his sense of destiny. "Is it 40 and finished?" he ruminated sombrely, as he entered his own forties.

As for the shortcomings of Lord Randolph as a father, there would have been little point in muzzling the truth, when Sir Winston himself had made no secret of it. In his own writings, he evoked the wistfulness of a childhood of characteristic but extreme upper-class deprivation, adoring the brilliant but remote father and mother who seldom troubled to notice his existence.

As soon as possible they packed him off to boarding school, too little interested to notice that the one they first chose was run by a tyrant who beat his pupils with sadistic relish. Many of the boy's letters from school were filled with pleas to be visited — and more than once with reproaches, after discovering from the newspapers that his father had visited Brighton on political engagements when he was at school there, and had not troubled to look him up.

Perennially short of pocket-money, he begged repeatedly for supplies of his father's signature, because the name of such a celebrity had considerable market value among autograph collectors at school. Randolph Churchill set out to tell his father's story largely through letters, and printed some of these classroom pleas for attention. But he approached his task in a spirit which was as much anecdotal as historical. "He would put a good story in for its own sake, but he was not especially interested in the cumulative aspect," Dr Gilbert says. "He did not set out to fit each episode in its place... The new



Devoted biographer: Randolph Churchill "was never constrained by family piety"



Young Winston: Churchill's own writings evoked the wistfulness of a childhood of upper-class deprivation

account is much shorter, but on almost every page there is something which was not in his version."

In one notable respect it was not Randolph but Winston who laid a false trail about his childhood, probably quite innocently. In his memoirs and potboiling newspaper articles about his early life, he fell into that almost obligatory tone of rueful self-disparagement of the writer who seeks to entertain without appearing immodest. In doing so, he planted the legend that he was

an incorrigible dunce at school, which has been such a source of reassurance to incorrigible dunces ever since. By delving into school reports and prize lists, Dr Gilbert has discovered that, though Churchill tended to neglect subjects that bored him, he could shine in ones that caught his imagination. He was a voracious reader, and won prizes in history. When the time came to choose between working for university entrance or for the army, his results gave no grounds for thinking

that university was out of reach. Lord Randolph had made up his mind that his son was a dunce, and decreed that he should go into army class.

Not only in early parts of book does new information materially change the story. "Don't be page 637," says Dr Gilbert, who has the page references of all his favourite episodes off by heart. It shows how the Norwegian campaign in 1940 was a disaster that needs have happened. We know now the Churchill was receiving detailed information from Enigma cypher all the time, but this was so new an unexpected that he had no means of explaining to the officers in the field that his exhortations to attack were based on precise knowledge of German strengths and intentions. So they did not take his advice, as the chance was missed. This extra light on his personality and the constraints he worked under.

Inevitably, there is a sharp contrast of style between the two biographies. Randolph had a literally Churchillian turn of phrase, which Dr Gilbert more urgent, purposeful narrative unavoidably discards. But in his rhetorical way, Dr Gilbert is quite devoted to his subject as his predecessor was, and as determined to affirm his greatness.

Churchill: A Life, by Martin Gilbert, published April 8 (Heinemann, £12.95)

'Randolph would put a good story in for its own sake — he did not set out to fit each episode in its place'

Singing the lights fantastic

Mary Webb (right) never saw the northern lights of old Aberdeen — but her melody lingers on



ON SUNDAY night the aurora borealis arched spectacularly over the northern skies in billowing shades of pink and green. This was the northern lights, or what Mary Webb called "the merry dancers in the sky".

Mrs Webb, from Leamington Spa, never saw the northern lights, yet she wrote a song about them which almost immediately found its way into that repertoire of unashamedly sentimental ballads sung in clubs and pubs, concert and village halls from Shetland to Tierra del Fuego.

Her song was "The Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen". The fact that the very English Mrs Webb had never visited Aberdeen was no bar to its popularity. Almost from the day it was first performed, in 1952, in the unlikely venue of the Albert Hall by the Scottish singer Robert Wilson, it became a folk favourite.

"The Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen" is sung on football terraces and it will probably turn out to have been sung by soldiers in the Gulf. Certainly it was the song that the crew of the Plymouth chose to sing in San Carlos water as they waited for a bomb to be defused during the Falklands conflict.

Mrs Webb's inspiration had been a homesick young cook she worked with in the west London hospital kitchens in the late Forties and early Fifties. During tea-break chats the girl, Winifred Forgie, talked about her home town

and her Oradian mother's description of the northern lights as "the merry dancers in the sky".

Mrs Webb's kitchen job may have been menial, but she was an accomplished pianist and played in wartime concert parties. Her husband,

Mel, a Canadian who had come to Britain in wartime to enlist, may have played a greater part in her success than she was to acknowledge. During research in 1989 for a television documentary, Jack Webster, a Glasgow journalist, discovered that Mr Webb had

spent part of the war with an anti-aircraft battery in Aberdeen. After the war he wrote to a Glaswegian friend, Archie P. Lee, for information about the northern lights.

Mr Lee wrote back that his mother had held him up to a window as a child in Glasgow and shown him the northern lights.

The song begins: "When I was a lad, a tiny wee lad, my mother said to me: Come see the northern lights, my boy. They're bright as they can be."

For a while in the Fifties, Mrs Webb was famous. The sheet music and Robert Wilson's recordings on the Beltona label sold in immense numbers. Mrs Webb was invited to Aberdeen, a city she was later to remark politely that seemed: "A very long way from anywhere." She gave several performances at The Tivoli variety hall between the railway station and the docks.

Then she slipped into obscurity. The last years of her life were eked out in a bedsit in West Kensington, her royalties by now but a few hundred pounds a year. She died on Easter Monday, 1989, aged 82.

The piano on which she wrote her song was given to Aberdeen art gallery. Her ashes were scattered in Aberdeen, beneath the lights she made famous but never saw.

ALASTAIR ROBERTSON

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A star is born: Robert Wilson on the cover of the sheet music

Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen

Robert Wilson on the cover of the sheet music

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Developed by a dentist, Dentemp is the first temporary filling mix for emergency home use. Now, when you lose a filling and can't get to your dentist immediately, you can actually replace a lost filling in your own home in just minutes. What's more, Dentemp can also be used to temporarily cement loose crowns or inlays. So you can avoid unnecessary pain and discomfort. Dentemp is an easy-to-use formula containing the same ingredients your own dentist might use for temporary fillings. It soothes irritated nerve endings. Calms pain. Seals up a temporary seal to help protect the cavity from heat, cold. No medicine chest should be without Dentemp. Use New Dentemp as directed.

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Loneliness is just one problem

And it is a fairly common problem for seafarers away from home for months at a time. But it is only one of the troubles that people bring to us. As a Christian society working among seafarers we are asked for all kinds of help—spiritual, emotional, social and practical. And we are there, ready to give all the help we can. In all parts of the world. To give this help we depend entirely upon voluntary contributions. Please help us to continue the Anglican Church's ministry to seafarers by a legacy, or please send whatever you can to The Missions to Seamen, Freepost, London, EC4B 4EP.

The Missions to Seamen

St. Michael Paternoster Royal, College Hill, London EC4R 2RL

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ALASTAIR ROBERTSON

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LITERATURE

Wit and fantastic wisdom of a local government officer

On the 25th anniversary of the death of Flann O'Brien, John Dugdale celebrates the works of the Irish humorist whose whimsical invention still attracts new audiences

Brian O'Nolan, who was better known as Flann O'Brien, or Myles na Gopaleen, is a sorry figure in the recent BC 2 television documentary *Three Irish Writers*, which also featured Patrick Swane and Brendan Behan. In a home movie of a pub crawl, he was seen being supported by his friends, a puny drunk in a shiny black suit and trilby. We got a giant intellect," he said testily in 1964 to an RTE interviewer in a Valencian car, "but the stuff I've published heretofore is just trash."

It is unfortunate that the only archive footage of Brian O'Nolan's records his final years, when alcoholism had destroyed his prodigious gifts. He died in 1966, aged 47, in the early Forties rather than the early Sixties, we might have images of him in his prime.

By 1943, when *Time* magazine profiled "Eire's Columnist", O'Nolan had published a novel in Irish (*An Béal Bocht*) and a novel in English (*Swim-Two-Birds*); the latter had been praised by James Joyce and Graham Greene. He had two mother tongues, he was fluent in human, and competent in Latin and Italian.

A national celebrity at 32, he produced six 500-word columns each week, holding down a full-time job as a bureaucrat. Small wonder, then, that the visiting office-writer felt unable to let out categorically the more fantastic items in the "official" *graph* in *Time*—he was handed: the claim to have informally beaten World Champion Alekhine at chess, for example, or the marriage of "18-year-old Clara Ungernd, blonde, violin-player, daughter of a Cologne basket-aver."

Over the past 25 years fact

has been sifted from fiction, and the following curriculum vitae is generally accepted. Born in 1911 in Strabane, Co. Tyrone, in what was to become Northern Ireland, Brian O'Nolan was the third of 12 children in a bilingual, Catholic household. In 1923 his father, a Customs and Excise officer, was assigned to Dublin, and the family took a house in Herbert Place, near the Canal. Like Joyce, O'Nolan was taught by priests, and chose to study at University College, Dublin (UCD), making his mark as a scintillating debater. His most celebrated achievement as an undergraduate was the publication in a college magazine of a story in old Irish, which turned out when translated to contain material that would nowadays find a home in the pages of *Viz*.

After graduating, he pursued various literary schemes with a Joycean clique of university wits, notably a satirical magazine called *Blather* and an aborted "great Irish novel"—a saga of four generations of an Irish-American family, boasting a Pope, a martyr in the 1916 Rebellion and a US president—which anticipates the *oeuvre* of Colleen McCullough.

He also took a Civil Service post in the Department of Local Government. For the next 18 years, between 1935 and 1953, he worked a five-and-a-half-day week in the Customs House, a handsome Georgian building on the Liffey's north bank. The column in the *Irish Times* was an unlooked-for consequence of a year-long

bogus correspondence conducted by O'Nolan and a drinking cronie, using ludicrous pseudonyms, in the paper's *Letters* page. Obligated eventually to call a halt to the hoax, the editor, R.M. Smylie—a bulky bully of legendary eccentricity, but an excellent talent scout—invited its initiator to write regularly for him. "Myles na Gopaleen" made

The virtuosity of the writing proclaims 'this is English, your language; now see what an Irishman can do with it!'

his debut in the *Irish Times* in October, 1940, and the byline continued to appear regularly until shortly before the author's death in 1966.

Cruiskeen Lawn was an exotic salmagundi of Dublin conversation, snog-bar satire (on Gaelic games, or municipal folly, or the antics of the Irish censor), travesties, crackpot inventions and *jeux d'esprit*. A characteristic Mylesian fantasy was the "ventriloquial escort service," designed to allow tongue-tied theatregoers to appear to be able to conduct intelligent conversation.

Not content with the basic idea, he developed it over several columns: disaffected

ventriloquists take to placing insults in innocent mouths, blackmail demands become a serious menace, theatre foyers are made "a wilderness of false voices, unaided remarks, speakerless speeches and scandalous utterances".

Other comic notions became regular features of *Cruiskeen Lawn*, such as the Research Bureau or the Plain People of Ireland. As Miles Kingston noted in 1968, O'Nolan "established a series of themes and characters, and then gradually enriched them in an unending sequence of deft miniatures or episodic sagas".

Myles na Gopaleen, humorist, and Brian O'Nolan, civil servant, share joint responsibility for the stuff of Flann O'Brien, novelist. The latter was silent for two decades, and *The Hard Life* and *The Dalkey Archive*, the novels he produced in the 1960s, are manifestly inferior: sporadically hilarious, but lacking in cohesion. (Though published posthumously in 1967, *The Third Policeman*, a brilliant absurdist fantasia involving bicycles, Einsteinian spacetime and a savant called De Selby, was written in 1939; stunned by its rejection by Longmans, O'Nolan pretended that he had lost the typescript.)

His masterpiece, *At Swim-Two-Birds*, has an elaborate contrapuntal plot. The narrator, an anonymous UCD student, is writing a novel about a moralistic novelist called Dermot Trellis, who treats his characters tyrannically. But these characters—who include the mythical Celtic hero Finn MacCool, the libertine Furriskey, a courteous hobgoblin called the Pooka MacPheelimsey, and sundry Dublin berles—stage a rebellion, avenging themselves on their author by making up a story in which he undergoes horrible torments.

Clearly, *At Swim-Two-Birds* is a post-modernist text *avant le lettre*, looking forward to the fiction of Robbe-Grillet and Calvino; yet O'Nolan's exceptional flair for comic dialogue and the exuberant assurance of his exercises in parody enable it to transcend the arid experimentation which vitiates many later "anti-novels". As in the early work of Joyce and Beckett, the virtuosity of the writing proclaims "this is English, your language; now see what an Irishman can do with it!"

Joyce admirers making a pilgrimage to the 1991 European City of Culture can visit the Anna Livia Plurabelle Fountain and follow the Tourist Office's "Ulysses Map of Dublin". But no such trail exists for fans of Flann O'Brien, the only one of the succession of outstanding



One man with three names: Flann O'Brien, Myles na Gopaleen and Brian O'Nolan

Irish prose writers born between 1850 and 1920 who chose to remain in Ireland. (Nor does he figure in the current scheme to rename the Liffey's quays after 20th-century authors.)

You have to devise your own tour: the Custom House, the old UCD site on St Stephen's Green, a whiskey or two in McDaid's or the Palace Bar, perhaps a bus to Dalkey. And the real devotee will

make the 160-mile round trip to Smagh-da-en (Swim-Two-Birds), Co. Offaly, across the Shannon from the monastic ruins of Clonmacnoise, the centre of Irish learning in the ninth century.

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Shaftesbury Avenue: a rich man's playground

Benedict Nightingale on the shortage of new plays in the West End and the poor prospects for any improvement

ast Tuesday a self-proclaimed "new comedy", *Don't Dress for Dinner*, opened at the Apollo, Shaftesbury Avenue, and turned out to be a piece of knowledge of a flimsy farce that enghts and intent enjoyed modest success at not take his advice same theatre 12 years ago was missed. This On Saturday, William Ni n his personality son's *Map of the Heart* nts he worked inspired after three lacklustre even the two biggest one play in the West End ad a literally Chastet can honestly be called

at the Tricycle because the right name could not be found for the main role. That is symptomatic. Impresarios have become less and less willing to stage even work of obvious commercial potential without ensuring that the production has what Peter Hall calls a "must-see quality". This usually means hiring one of perhaps 30 or 40 performers—Penelope Keith to Derek Jacobi, Felicity Kendal to Jeremy Irons—who are

costs average £30,000 a week? A play must fill 70 per cent of a medium-sized theatre's seats for six to nine months to pay the rent and return a profit. If Michael Codron is right—and there is no canner producer of new work—that verges on the impossible. He reckons the audience for a good, intelligent play is all but exhausted after six months. There is scant chance of seeing the likes of Tom Kempinski's *Separation* or Stephen Bill's *Certain* in the commercial sector.

Four years ago, both did well at Hampstead, but moved to the West End they lost the money invested in them. No wonder producers these days are opting for stony revivals or for musicals in large theatres, where the danger of failure is great but the potential profits equally so. Even in the subsidised sector, new work seems lacking, with only the National upping its supply. The Royal Court has halved production in the last decade. Adrian Noble's RSC promises overwhelmingly to be a classical company, and regional reps are increasingly opting for safe revivals.

What is to be done, at least in the West End? The lesson of Broadway is that raising ticket prices excludes younger punters and reduces the chance of taking creative risks. One producer, Robert Fox, does think that New York might teach us one thing. Here, theatre landlords expect 15 per cent of the gross, compared with 9 per cent there. In their own long-term interest, he argues, they should be more self-denying.

Yet, in defiance of all the signs, most major new-play producers still have plans. Codron hopes to stage Ayckbourn's *Revenger's Comedies*, Fox a piece by Julian Mitchell, Turnstyle one by Sharran Macdonald, and Hall a play about Goering by Romulus Linney. But even Sir Peter would not assay this without Klaus-Maria Brandauer in the main role. The time when a play succeeds in the West End because it is good is gone.



Silly Cow: Patrick Barlow and Dawn French

What chance of recovering investment when running costs average £30,000 a week?

considered capable of compensating at the box office for an unknown dramatist. But where stars would once have committed themselves to a play for six or even 12 months, they now often insist on leaving after three.

Economics reinforce the point. Twenty years ago, *Streak* cost £13,000 to stage and made £2 million. What chance of such profit with plays priced at a minimum of £200,000, and the public increasingly demanding more than the tiny cast and single set this now buys? What chance of recovering that investment when running

Following the unexpected world ginseng shortage, the manufacturers of Gordon's Gin would like to reassure their customers that it will continue to be produced to the same high standards that have made it the world's finest gin. The reduced availability of ginseng will not affect either its refreshing taste or its energising properties.

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THE TIMES MONDAY APRIL 1 1991

CHANNEL 4

[illegible][illegible]

2.95 Tes Banky 3.05 Rifferty's Rules
2.95 Tes Banky 4.15 Phyllis 4.35 The Great
American Gameshow 6.00 The Safe-
system Shopping Channel 8.00 Close 10.00
The Safe-Vision Shopping Channel 12.00
Satellite Jubbox

THE MOVIE CHANNEL

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5.15pm The Great American Gameshow 6.00 The Safe-
system Shopping Channel 8.00 Close 10.00
The Safe-Vision Shopping Channel 12.00
Satellite Jubbox

THE SPORTS CHANNEL

© Vis the Marcapolo satellite.
11.30am Australian Rugby League 1.30pm
Scottish Football 3.15 British Rugby League
5.00 A Day at the Beach 6.00 Tuff Turf 7.00
NWA Wrestling 8.00 Italian Football 10.00
Superbouts 11.00 Red Line 12.00 Italian
Football

THE POWER STATION

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7.25am Twenty-one hours of rock and pop

10.00 The Dead Can't Lie (1988). A man
becomes a private detective to stop his wife
from haunting him. Starring Tommy Lee
Jones and Virginia Madsen
11.40 Florida Straits (1986). Raul Julia
burns to his native Cuba to search for
buried treasure
1.30am Gator Salt II: Cajun Justice (1988)
When Larry and his band of thugs
grievously Big T's wedding party, they
trigger a chain of events which brings horror
and death to the swamp. Ends at 3.10

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Turner scarcely able to credit his fortune

Mutch keeps Wolves knocking at the door

Sutton in form for Cup final

10

Hopes of increased power generation competition fade

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

HIGHER gas prices, weak prices in the electricity pool and extensions to the planned lives of nuclear power stations have undermined hopes that a rash of gas-fired power stations would introduce more competition in electricity generation. Only a handful of independent generation projects may now be completed before the turn of the century.

Before British Gas raised its bulk supply interruptible price 35 per cent last month, in a move designed to curtail demand, the company knew of "63 or 64" independent gas generation projects. So far, only one company, Anglia Energy, has formally abandoned plans for a power station, but many more are likely to follow.

Five independent gas-fired generation projects with a combined output of 2,800 megawatts have signed gas purchase contracts to date. Up to 18 more are thought to have been seeking gas supplies but may now reconsider.

National Power and PowerGen, which share all but the nuclear generating assets of the former Central Electricity Generating Board in England and Wales, have drawn up plans for another five gas-fired power stations with a combined capacity of 4,580mw. A further 600mw is likely to be provided from renewable energy projects by 1993.

Nuclear Electric and Scottish Nuclear, which have a franchise to sell all the power they can produce, are seeking to extend the life of their ageing Magnox power stations. If successful, their total contribution will probably increase, further bolstered by the 1,372mw pressurised water reactor at Sizewell B, which will come on stream towards the end of the decade.

Nigel Hawkins, power analyst at Hoare Govett, the broker, anticipates that an additional 10,000mw of generating capacity will be needed in Britain by the turn of the century. On that basis, the five independent projects already contracted plus stations planned by the two main generators will meet increases in British demand through to the year 2000.

National Power and PowerGen, which rely heavily on coal-fired plants, have, however, begun to close some of their older, less efficient coal burning stations. Pressure to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions. Constructing a significant number of combined cycle gas burning stations enables them to meet limits at a lower capital cost, and potentially with lower production costs.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the director general of electricity supply, will try to stimulate competition and prevent either National Power or PowerGen from increasing its market share. In Britain, the government is likely to come under growing pressure to allow more gas imports to increase competition in power generation.

John Wakeham, the energy secretary, said in a parliamentary written reply that approvals of one kind or another have been granted for 19 independent gas fired power stations with a total capacity of almost 10,000mw. The list includes a 1,050mw project by the Neptune Consortium, comprising Scottish Hydro and Northern Electric, on Teeside, where a new pipeline from the North Sea will assure gas supplies.

The prospects for Scottish Hydro, expected in early May, will contain details of another substantial gas power project. Unlike most independent generating consortia, the Scots companies have a commitment to power generation as a mainstream part of their business, and market knowledge and management expertise gained from selling surplus power to England.

Pensions watchdog opens for business

By MARTIN BARROW

THE new pensions ombudsman starts tomorrow. Michael Platt has the authority to settle disputes and award damages on behalf of 20 million personal pension plan holders and members of occupational pension schemes.

Mr Platt, a civil servant with the social security department, has been appointed under a government-funded scheme that aims to simplify disputes procedures. All state pensions and public service pensions, except in the National Health Service in England and Wales, remain outside Mr Platt's remit.

The ombudsman will operate alongside the existing Occupational and Pensions Advisory Service (Opas) and will intervene only if Opas fails to satisfy the complainant. In the first instance, complaints should be addressed to trustees or managers of pension schemes.

From tomorrow, Opas may investigate cases involving personal pensions as well as company schemes. Mr Platt will have the power to investigate allegations of maladministration and can settle disputes of fact or law. He may demand information and can order witnesses to attend hearings. There is no maximum limit on the compensation he may award. His decisions will be binding on the parties concerned, subject to a right of appeal on a point of law to the High Court.

Neither Opas nor the ombudsman can intervene in disputes relevant to one of the self-regulatory financial bodies.

Boddington chain grows



THE Boddington Group opened its fourth Village Leisure Hotel at the weekend. Hubert Reid, left, group managing director, and Ron Zaure, managing director of the group's hotel and restaurant division, hope the hotel, at Broomborough, the Wirral, will prove popular with both nearby residents and travelling businessmen. As at the company's three other village hotels, people from the surrounding area are encouraged to use its sports facilities, dining rooms and bars. When Boddington opened its last hotel, membership of the leisure club was over-subscribed within a fortnight.

Banks consider provisions against Russian debt

BRITISH banks are considering making provisions against their exposure in the Soviet Union because of deteriorating economic conditions there, bankers and analysts said.

"We are actively considering making a provision for the first time," said one banker at a leading UK clearing bank. "It could be at 5 per cent - the minimum laid down by the Bank of England matrix."

The matrix is a framework for objective analysis of the repayment difficulties of each country and must be used for tax concessions to be claimed.

Under the matrix system, banks score each country every quarter based on previous payment behaviour, arrears and a series of debt indicators. The last also includes a score (maximum five points) based on other conditions in the country.

To trigger the minimum 5 per cent provision, a country must score at least 10 points.

Another senior banker said: "We are getting very close to making a provision." He said some UK banks would find it more difficult to make provisions due to the state of their balance sheets.

Deutsche Bank is making large provisions against problem east European debt and other German banks are likely to follow suit. German banks have much larger exposure to eastern Europe and the Soviet Union than those in the UK.

British bankers said a provision against Soviet debt may be some way off as the matrix requires the decision to be made against a 15-month moving average of the scores. (Reuters)

Elga tests Soviet water

ELGA Group, the water purification and laboratory equipment maker, has won its first order in the Soviet Union.

The company has been awarded a £500,000 contract to supply water purification equipment to a state-owned vodka plant in the Baltic port of Kaliningrad.

Purified water has a number of uses, ranging from washing microchips to use in whisky or soft drinks. In this latest deal, the group's plant will take waste water and recycle it from the vodka making process, although it may also be used in the manufacturing process for a cola drink.

A similar plant has been sold in the north of England for use in larger manufacture.

Greece plans £1n tourism campaign

By PHILIP PANGALOS

THE Greek government plans to spend £1 million on an advertising campaign to lure back British travellers.

Recession and events in the Gulf have adversely affected Greece's tourist industry where bookings have fallen by between 60 per cent and 70 per cent.

Yannis Kefaloyannis, Greece's minister of tourism, said in London he was optimistic about the future. Greece's tourist industry expressed gratitude for its participation in the 1.5 million Britons visit Greece last year, the second highest number and a marginally behind Germany.

Referring to the £1 million campaign, understood to be placed with Saatchi Saatchi, Mr Kefaloyannis said: "This is a substantial amount considering the economic constraints facing a country like Greece."

An example is Olympic Airways, Greece's national airline, due to see a 40 per cent drop in the private sector which almost collapsed as a result of the Gulf war, carrier experienced sharp reductions in domestic and international services.

Olympic said it lost additional 10.6 billion drams (£33 million) last year after the start of the confrontation in August, airline, which owes a £120 million, dictated a further revenue of Dr8 billion for the quarter of this year.

Tourism, which generates more foreign exchange for Greece than shipping, counts for almost 6 per cent of gross domestic product. About 8 million tourists visited in 1989, generating 1.5 billion drams. Last year there were 7.5 million arrivals, generating \$4.2 billion.

Greece will, however, work hard to lure foreigners, some of whom are concerned by recent attacks by extremists, the two attacks on C.I. branches yesterday.

Mr Kefaloyannis said Greek government plans series of big projects to enhance tourist infrastructure.

AT&T poised for \$7bn deal

From PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

A \$7 BILLION merger between AT&T, America's long-distance telephone giant, and NCR, the computer maker, is expected to be hammered out this week. The two companies, which have been fighting for about four months, are now only \$10-a-share apart on price.

The mood change is after a special shareholders' meeting last week at which AT&T managed to oust four members of the NCR board, including Charles Exley, the chairman.

NCR will expand its board levels of \$88 each. But NCR, America's fifth-largest computer maker, which employs 1,300 in Scotland, wanted \$125 a share from AT&T.

Shortly before the special shareholders' meeting last Thursday, NCR indicated it would talk at \$110 a share. AT&T maintains that its top price is \$100 but sources close to the company say it would go to \$105 in a share swap and friendly merger.

At that level NCR would be valued at a little more than \$7 billion. Its shares jumped \$2 to close at \$99.625 on Friday.



Platt: wider powers

Court of Appeal

Power of court in criminal appeals

Regina v McKinnery, Regina v Hill, Regina v Power, Regina v Walker, Regina v Hunter, Regina v Callaghan

Before Lord Justice Lloyd, Lord Justice Mustill and Lord Justice Farquharson [Reasons March 27]

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, did not have any inherent jurisdiction as it was a creature of statute. All the court's powers were therefore contained within various statutes and it had no power to conduct an open-ended investigation into alleged miscarriage of justice.

It had a limited function as it was a court of review and unlike the Civil Division it did not rehear the whole of the case.

It was for the court to decide whether a conviction was unsafe or unsatisfactory. The words "unsafe" and "unsatisfactory" in section 2(1) of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 were disjunctive and did not have different meanings from each other.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so held in giving reasons for allowing the appeals of Richard McKinnery, John Hill, William Power, Patrick Walker, Robert Garth Hunter and Hugh Callaghan against their convictions at the Central Criminal Court (Judge Bridge

and a jury) on 21 counts of murder.

Section 2 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 provides: "(1) the Court of Appeal shall allow an appeal against conviction if they think - (a) that the conviction should be set aside on the ground that under all the circumstances the case is unsafe or unsatisfactory."

Mr Michael Mansfield, QC and Mr Nicholas Blake for all the appellants except Hunter, Lord Gifford, QC and Mr James A. D. Wood for Hunter, Mr Graham Beal, Mr Timothy Landale, Mr John F. Maxwell and Mr William Boyce for the prosecution.

THEIR LORDSHIPS, giving the judgment of the court, said that the Court of Appeal was a creature of statute and therefore its powers derived from and were confined to those contained in the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 and the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

Apart from that it had no inherent jurisdiction. The court did not therefore conduct an open-ended investigation into alleged miscarriage of justice.

The court had been guided by Parliament in the exercise of its powers. Section 2(1) of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 directed the court to allow an appeal against conviction if the conviction was unsafe or unsatisfactory.

There had been a wrong decision on a question of law, or that there had been a material irregularity. In all other cases the court had to dismiss the appeal.

Where the court allowed an appeal it would then have to quash the conviction by virtue of section 2(2) of the 1968 Act. Once the conviction had been quashed the order operated as a direction under section 2(3) for the trial court to enter a verdict of acquittal unless a retrial had been ordered.

The 1968 Act did not contain any provisions which obliged or entitled the court to state whether they thought the appellant was innocent.

That was a point of great constitutional importance for the court. The court then had to consider whether the appellant was innocent. The Court of Appeal was concerned with whether the verdict should stand.

The primary of the jury in the criminal justice system illustrated the difference between the powers of the Criminal and Civil Divisions of the court. Although the Civil Division was also a creature of statute it had wider powers. The appeal was by way of a rehearing of the whole case concerning itself with facts as well as with the law.

As justice was as much concerned with the conviction of the guilty as with the acquittal of the innocent, and the task of convicting the guilty belonged constitutionally to the jury, the

role of the Criminal Division of the Court of Appeal was necessarily limited as a court of review.

The court was unable to upset the verdict of a jury on a question of fact unless it was thought to be unsafe or unsatisfactory under all the circumstances of the case.

Although the adversarial nature of criminal proceedings allowed the defendant to test the prosecution case in open court, the parties' resources might not be evenly matched.

The inequality of resources was ameliorated by the obligation on the part of the prosecution to make available all material which might prove helpful to the defence. The defendant's system prevailed at the trial but also in the Court of Appeal.

Difficulty arose where a retrial was impracticable in an appeal relying on fresh evidence. The court then had to determine whether the conviction was unsafe or unsatisfactory without having the benefit of hearing the evidence tested by cross-examination.

The words "unsafe" and "unsatisfactory" in section 2(1) of the 1968 Act were disjunctive and had never been interpreted by any court as having a meaning from each other.

Solicitors: B. M. Birnberg & Co, Southwark; Giffens, Walsall, CPS.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLL, giving the judgment of the court, said that the plaintiff was a fit young man of 27 serving as a regular soldier who was diagnosed as suffering from Perone's disease, the symptom of which was a curvature of the penis which could render sexual intercourse difficult.

To ascertain the extent of the abnormality he underwent tests by injection. Thereafter he became ill, been re-admitted to hospital where further tests revealed that the penis had become infected. In an operation for a skin graft, it became a major part of the penis had to be removed.

His Lordship referred to the resulting psychological trauma to the plaintiff. Liability was admitted, the only issue was as to damages.

His Lordship set out section 69 of the 1981 Act which preserved jury trials in respect of actions involving fraud, libel, slander, malicious prosecution or false imprisonment, but by subsection (3) provided that other actions to be tried in the Queen's Bench Division should be tried without a jury unless the court in its discretion ordered otherwise.

His Lordship contrasted that

provision with its predecessor, section 6 of the Administration of Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1933 which it repealed. That section had provided that any such action might, in the discretion of the court or the judge, be ordered to be tried either with or without a jury.

In *Ward v James* (1966) 1 QB 273, the leading case on the appropriate mode of trial in personal injury actions when the 1933 Act was in force, Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls, had explained that damages for pain and suffering and loss of the amenities of life in such actions could never be truly compensatory and that conventional scales had evolved.

The unsuitability of juries determining such awards stemmed from the practical difficulty of informing them of the conventional scales or of giving them sufficient guidance to enable them to make an appropriate award without usurping their function. On the other hand justice required consistency of approach.

Lord Denning had said (at p303) that the judge's knowledge and the jury's ignorance of the conventional figures was the most material consideration for the judge when deciding whether or not to order a jury trial; that it was so important that the judge ought not, save in exceptional circumstances, to order such a trial in a personal injury case, and that even when the issue of liability was fit for such a trial, the judge might nevertheless consider that damages be assessed by a judge alone.

Since then there had only been one reported instance of an order for the trial of a personal injury case with a jury: see

Law Report April 1 1991

H v Ministry of Defence

Before Lord Donaldson of Lynton, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Woolf and Lord Justice Mann [Judgment March 21]

It was normally inappropriate to order trial by jury for the assessment of compensatory damages in personal injury actions such as an assessment of damages against jury trials in the conventional scales of damages known to a judge but not to a jury.

Section 69(3) of the Supreme Court Act 1981 shifted the emphasis against jury trials in the Queen's Bench Division and strengthened the presumption that only in very exceptional circumstances would the court exercise its discretion to order such a trial in a personal injury action.

Where the plaintiff's claim for compensatory damages related to exceptionally traumatic and unusual injuries, the assessment of damages would nevertheless be made by reference to and in compatibility with the conventional scales and accordingly trial by jury was inappropriate.

The Court of Appeal so held allowing an appeal by the Ministry of Defence from Mr Justice Hutchison who had ordered that the trial by jury of H's claim for compensatory damages caused by the medical negligence of the defendants, who admitted liability. The court prohibited the publication of the name or other identification of the plaintiff.

Mr Hugh Carlisle, QC and Mr Robert Jay for the defendants, Mr Stephen Sedley, QC and Mr Mathias Kelly for the plaintiff.

Jury inappropriate in injuries claim

H v Ministry of Defence

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Dealing with confiscation order defaulters

Regina v Harrow Justices, Ex parte Director of Public Prosecutions

Before Lord Justice Stuart-Smith and Mr Justice Turner [Judgment March 27]

Magistrates should make enquiry of the prosecutor before issuing a warrant of commitment against a defaulter who was the subject of a confiscation order under the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held in granting the Crown Prosecution Service certiorari to quash a decision of Harrow Justices to issue a warrant committing Jaishank Desai to prison for 30 months for want of payment of a confiscation order.

Mr Andrew Mitchell for the CPS; the justices did not appear and were not represented.

months imprisonment in default.

The magistrates had subsequently issued a warrant of commitment without any enquiry into Mr Desai's means, relying on the fact that he was at the time serving a prison sentence. The magistrates' court was unable because of *R v Newport Pagnell Justices, Ex parte Smith* (1988) 152 JP 475 to withdraw the warrant.

The effect of the issue of the warrant was to cause his further imprisonment and, *pro rata* with the fraction of the default period served, to relieve him of the requirement to satisfy the confiscation order.

That was in total contradiction to the plain purpose and effect of the 1986 Act which was that a person convicted of a drug offence should be deprived of the proceeds to the extent that they were realisable.

In their Lordships' view the discretion which it was incumbent on the magistrates to exercise before proceeding to issue a warrant under section 7 of the Magistrates' Court Act 1980 should have prompted enquiry of the prosecutor.

That was so because:

1 Before the crown court made the confiscation order, as a matter of law it had to carry out the procedures of valuation of proceeds and assessment of

realisable amounts under the 1986 Act.

2 As a matter of comity, if no more reference to the prosecutor's evidence at whose instigation alone the order of confiscation was made was clearly required.

3 The fact that the order embodied a realisable amount must have demonstrated that the crown court was highly likely still to be available to satisfy the order.

4 The justices should have considered all other methods of enforcing payment prior to the issue of a warrant of commitment which would have the effect of blinding the amount to be received under the order.

Although it was not the function of the court in applications for an order of certiorari to provide general guidance to magistrates' courts, magistrates should keep in mind the following points when exercising their discretion whether or not to issue a warrant of commitment:

1 The object of a confiscation order was to divest the defaulter of money or realisable assets.

2 Consequently, it was not a matter of choice for the defaulter to "buy" his way out of such an order by serving the prison term imposed in default of responding to the confiscation order.

3 The mere fact of a confiscation order was evidence that at the date it was made there were realisable assets available to meet the requirements of the order.

4 Even if at the date when justices had to consider the question of enforcement the value of realisable assets was less than they were at the date of the confiscation order, it was open to the defaulter to apply for a certificate of inadequacy under section 14 of the 1986 Act which would lead to a reduction in the amount of the original order.

5 Given the *inter partes* nature of the procedure leading to the making of a confiscation order, it would be the nature of things that the prosecution would in all probability have information available which would be relevant for the justices' consideration. More compellingly, the prosecution had a legitimate interest in being heard before the justices came to any decision.

6 Given the purposes of the 1986 Act, it was incumbent on magistrates to consider all methods of enforcement short of issuing a warrant of commitment in a Drug Trafficking Offences Act case before doing so.

Solicitors: CPS, Central Confiscation Unit.

Listing child cases before welfare reports received

In re H (a Minor)

It was to be suggested, and it was only a suggestion, that county courts which followed a practice of not listing the full hearing of a child custody case until a welfare report had been received, thereby causing unnecessary delay, should adopt the practice of the Family Division of listing the case as soon as it was known that a welfare report would be ready at a certain date.

Lord Justice Balcombe, sitting in the Court of Appeal with Lord Justice McCowan and Sir Christopher Slade on March 15 so stated when dismissing a father's appeal from the decision of Judge Allardice on December 12, 1990 to grant interim custody of two daughters to the maternal grandfather under section 8(2) of the Family Law Act 1986, the proce-

Such appeals ought to be expedited with an early full hearing date thereafter.

LORD JUSTICE BALCOMBE said that the present division of the appellate court had recently seen several appeals from interim orders relating to children.

Where, having given a positive breath sample below 50 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath, a driver by his own actions frustrated the efforts of a police officer to explain to him his right to opt for a blood or urine sample under section 8(2) of the Road Traffic Act 1988, the prosecu-

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Borderline breath

Director of Public Prosecutions v Poole

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Borderline breath

Director of Public Prosecutions v Poole

Where, having given a positive breath sample below 50 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath, a driver by his own actions frustrated the efforts of a police officer to explain to him his right to opt for a blood or urine sample under section 8(2) of the Road Traffic Act 1988, the prosecu-

PLY THE BEST

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RENTALS

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the 1950s and 1960s, the 1970s and 1980s, and the 1990s and 2000s. The 1950s and 1960s were characterized by a strong emphasis on the role of the state in the economy, while the 1970s and 1980s saw a shift towards a more market-oriented approach. The 1990s and 2000s have seen a continued emphasis on market-oriented policies, but with a growing focus on social and environmental issues.

or Fax 071-481 931

Mark yen

Thin markets during a holiday period can offer central banks the ideal opportunity to spring a "bear trap". The trap set for currency speculators during the new year holidays in 1988 proved that central bank intervention could be spectacularly successful. The dollar-yen rate has never again fallen as low as it did in that first week of January.

In that case, the central banks were turning the tide against a long-term trend which had outlived its natural span. This

In that case, the central banks were turning the tide against a long-term trend which had outlived its natural span. This

First quoted last Thursday, *Financial Editor*

were cut from a peak of 155p a year ago, the shares fell to 103p where they stagnated between November and February, but recovered to 130p last month.

Forecasts for the year to the end of last December are for profits virtually unchanged at

[illegible][illegible]

Significantly, the Bank of Japan was the one central bank that failed to support the dollar two months ago when the American currency was falling to record lows. In the weeks ahead, as in early 1988, Tokyo rather than Frankfurt will be the place for currency speculators to watch.

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1. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$

First quoted last Thursday, *Financial Editor*

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BUSINESS

Business Editor
John Bell

MONDAY APRIL 1 1991

Helping
make UK
karaoke
sound OKFrom JOANNA FITMAN
IN TOKYO

FOREIGN businessmen visiting Japan, and hoping to impress the Japanese business fraternity, now need to rehearse more than mere bowing angles and business card swapping techniques.

The attribute guaranteed to delight Japanese businessmen and ease negotiations the next day is "karaoke confidence", or the ability to sing Japanese songs (or translations of them) in public over a pre-recorded backing track.

Humming the odd John Lennon ditty in the bath is considered by the Japanese to be shoddy preparation for this serious ritual. They all practice at home.

However, help for aspirant British karaoke artists is now at hand. Pioneer Electronic is to set up a subsidiary near London to produce and distribute karaoke laser discs and software in five European languages from May 1.

Foreigners blessed with "karaoke confidence" are rare creatures, able to survive five or six hours of lavish Japanese-style business entertainment and still deliver recognisable renditions of folk songs into the microphone.

A typical evening's business entertainment in Tokyo will involve a delicate meal of a few slivers of raw abalone, a shellfish, on a bed of chrysanthemums - a feast for the eyes if not for the stomach - and washed down with a medley of beer, sake and whisky.

The party then repairs to a bar in the Ginza, an entertainment district of Tokyo, where, for roughly the cost of a family skiing holiday in Switzerland, the assembled imbibers more whisky to cast aside inhibitions and stand up to sing.

Pioneer's British venture, Pioneer LDCE, is perhaps being set up in response to what is considered by the Japanese to be the generally low quality of British singing in Japanese bars.

One Japanese banker who regularly entertains British clients conceded that most of the foreign singing was done under duress, but even so it was often earsplitting. Americans seemed much better, he suggested.

Pioneer hopes to spread the karaoke cult throughout Europe. Already popular in America and Southeast Asia, there are still few karaoke bars in European capitals.

French state aid expected to cause outcry in Community

By WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU
EUROPEAN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

ROGER Fauroux, the French industry minister, will start a fierce dispute with the rest of the European Community this week when he announces a multi-billion franc package to help French industry.

His proposals are likely to meet strong opposition from the European Commission, which, with backing from Britain and several other states, has vowed to fight state aid that is likely to distort competition within the Community.

M Fauroux's plan includes large hand-outs to state-owned companies, including

Renault, the car manufacturer, and Bull, the computer firm. His announcement will follow one of the worst weeks for the French corporate sector, as leading companies reported heavy declines in profits, and the government revised its forecasts for economic growth down to 2 per cent.

The commission last year forced Renault to repay Fr3 billion, which it had received in aid from the government. The aid, originally authorised by the commission, was to allow Renault to restructure and reduce capacity, although these commitments were not fulfilled. The commission's attitude has since hardened. France is suffering an economic slow-

down that last year took its toll of corporate profits. The most disappointing performance came from Bull, which is 93 per cent state-owned and made a loss of Fr6.8 billion last year, and from Renault, where net profits were down 83 per cent amid declining European market shares for Renault cars. Profits also fell at Paribas, the French bank.

Bull, which tried to expand into the world league by buying the Honeywell computer business, stands to receive at least Fr2 billion from the government to fund restructuring and to sustain the group's strong research and development spending, which last year amounted to 11

per cent of the company's Fr34.6 billion turnover. French private companies have said they feared most of the government aid would go to the state sector. State aid for restructuring to reduce capacity is one of the few cases acceptable under EC rules. There is much less freedom for research and development aid, which should be for fundamental industry research rather than research for an individual company.

It is understood the commission is apprehensive about M Fauroux's measures. If state aid is granted to Bull, there is likely to be an outcry from other European computer makers, most of which are suffering heavy losses because of the

downturn in the market. The same is the case if Renault or Peugeot receive aid, as sales and margins in the car industry are under increasing pressure throughout Europe.

The French government is particularly sensitive about its car industry, which will face heavy competition from Japanese-owned manufacturers in the late Nineties when the Community and Japan are expected to move to a system of free trade. France, which opposes further liberalisation of the EC car market, operates fierce import restrictions on Japanese cars, while its domestic car makers enjoy the lion's share of the home market.

Sales surge in
rush to beat
VAT increase

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH AND ROSS TIEMAN

SALES surged at stores throughout the weekend as customers bought expensive items before today's 2½ point increase in value added tax.

A spokesman for the Texas DIY chain, part of Ladbrooke Group, said: "It looks like a bumper weekend. The weather has obviously played its part, in addition to the VAT offer that we have. We are a bit snowed under."

He said extra staff were being drafted in to help with an expected rush today. "We expect it to be a record day," Stanley Kalms, chairman of Dixons, the electronic and photographic retailer, said it was "dramatically obvious" that people had brought forward bigger purchases.

But he emphasised that sales throughout March were well ahead of the same period a year ago, raising his confidence that retail sales may have begun a slow recovery.

Retailers will be waiting to see whether the VAT increase to 17½ per cent, announced in the Budget, stifles any upturn. B&Q, Britain's biggest DIY chain, which is part of the Kingfisher group, will start altering price tickets on 19 million products this week to reflect the tax increase.

Implementing the VAT change will cost the chain £2 million. The price rises will not come into effect until after the end of the Easter weekend, traditionally the busiest time of the year for DIY chains.

Jim Hodgkinson, the chain's chief executive, did not expect the VAT increase to make a big difference to sales. While people looking for large items probably made an effort to beat the VAT increases, the extra tax would not have been significant in decisions to buy smaller items.

B&Q, which made a £95.7 million profit last year, as much as the other main DIY chains put together, is finding the recession tough. All the increase in sales last year came from store openings.

The good weather has been boosting weekend sales of garden furniture and gardening products.

Ian Brewer, deputy manager of an Essex branch of Do It All, said: "We're exceptionally busy. People seem to be buying mainly decorative things, such as paint, wallpaper and door furniture, and all the associated items."

The Kingfisher chains, Woolworths, Comet and B&Q, are expected to pass on the VAT increase to the customer. Boots, which is in addition to the chemist chain

owns Halfords and half of Payless/Do It All also said it would pass the increase on.

Mr Kalms said most large retailers had little scope to absorb the VAT increases, and in any case, he argued, to absorb a tax would be wrong.

But Marks and Spencer, Britain's biggest retailer, has said it will absorb the increase until midsummer, which will cost the chain an estimated £25 million in the next three months. VAT is not charged on food or children's clothing, both of which M&S sells, but the group's decision not to increase prices will put pressure on its competitors.

Most retailers will experiment with pricing, increasing some goods by more than the VAT increase and leaving other price-sensitive products unchanged. Gerald Ratner, chairman and chief executive of the Ratners jewellery group, which is expected to absorb much of the VAT increase, said some retailers who put up prices would discover that the market cannot bear it and would be forced to reduce prices later.

LBS expects upturn

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT, FINANCIAL EDITOR

THE London Business School expects a revival in consumer spending to start immediately, limiting the recession and bringing a faster recovery than

the Treasury expects. In its post-Budget economic forecast, the LBS expects output to fall only 0.8 per cent this year compared with the 2 per cent drop predicted by Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, in his Budget speech.

The LBS expects consumer spending to rise 0.3 per cent this year, while the Treasury has forecast a fall of 1.7 per cent. Inflation would be slightly higher than the Chancellor's forecast of 4 per cent in the fourth quarter.

"The Treasury is too pessimistic on output prospects this year," said David Currie and Geoffrey Dicks of the LBS economic forecasting centre. "Our judgment remains that there will be a pick-up in consumer confidence from now on. We believe consumption has now bottomed out and growth will resume in the second quarter."

Real incomes are still rising, while inflation and mortgage rates are falling and increases in social security payments come into effect today. Tax cuts implied by the Budget increases in allowances will also boost pay packets in the second quarter, they said.

The headquarters of Technology & Development Group and TMG Engineering were quiet over the weekend. Both companies are owned by Al-Arabi Trading, a Baghdad holding company, and, in turn, owned tool manufacturing companies that exported to Iraq.

As a result, they have come under the scrutiny of Kroll Associates, the Wall Street detective agency hired by the



Sales boost: Jim Hodgkinson, of B&Q, at his new store in Dorset at the weekend

Sewells has £450m goal
in 'one-stop' autoparks

By PHILIP PANGALOS

SEWELLS T & C, which provides training and consultation services to the motor industry, plans to set up a network of "one-stop" shopping autoparks which it hopes will become worth more than £450 million over the next six years.

Sewells, which is a subsidiary of CRT Group, the fully quoted training and recruitment consultancy, will manage the sites.

The first autopark, which will cost about £17 million, is due to be opened next year and will be the model for 26 sites planned throughout Britain.

The initial 25-acre site will be in Norfolk, between King's Lynn and Norwich, and will provide customers with a choice of more than 1,000 new and used cars, with up to 24 new car makes sold

through dealerships at the park.

Maurice Perle, the chief executive of Sewells, said that all the main manufacturers would be represented.

Lines of credit have been established to finance the project and each autopark will be financed separately. Mr Perle said the funding had been handled by three big investment banks, including one British bank.

The Norwich site will include a car parts and accessories supermarket, a fast car-servicing depot, restaurants, children's amusements and creches. Mr Perle said: "We hope to attract people from up to 30 or 40 miles away. It's very much a consumer caring operation. We hope to get away from past images." Sewells has strict rules and regula-

tions on the site's management to ensure this.

Manufacturers' representatives will take out leases on the sites, with about 50 per cent of the Norwich autopark already allocated.

All of the 26 sites have been selected, with the next two planned for Crawley and Heathrow. One site is planned for each county, with four in the Greater London area. The autoparks are expected to cost between £17 million and £40 million each to develop. They are expected to attract between 2,500 and 3,000 people each week.

The first site should open in 1992, with the balance expected over three to five years.

The sites are being developed for Motor Dealer Developments, a property group.

CBI to reject
equal pay plan

THE Confederation of British Industry will today renew its backing for reform of the law to achieve equal pay for men and women, but will give short shrift to plans from the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The CBI will argue that commission proposals would make industrial tribunal hearings longer. The employers' organisation also opposes plans that tribunals powers to reject appeals with little hope of success should be withdrawn.

However, the CBI backs a commission call for specialist training for industrial tribunal members to help them identify sex discrimination.

Creditors take legal
action against MGM

FROM REUTERS IN LOS ANGELES

SIX creditors of MGM-Pathe Communications, the film studio formed in a billion-dollar buy last November by Giancarlo Parretti, the Italian financier, have filed a suit seeking to force the company into involuntary bankruptcy.

The creditors filed a suit late on Friday in Los Angeles. An MGM-Pathe spokesman said: "The petition was unwarranted and will be vigorously resisted."

Since Signor Parretti bought MGM/UA Communications

last November and merged it with Pathe, the company's financial health has been questioned. Recently MGM-Pathe was forced to delay the release of a film due to lack of funds.

"MGM-Pathe has been paying its creditors and is obtaining additional financing that will substantially strengthen its financial position," the spokesman said. The company has been negotiating with Credit Lyonnais for financing and hopes for favourable news this week.

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The trail goes cold on Saddam's gold

By JON ASHWORTH

AMERICA'S treasury department will today publish more than a hundred names of companies linked to Iraqi president Saddam Hussein's overseas investment strategy. But if any of his supposed \$33 billion fortune has found its way to Britain, it has been hidden well.

Even the sharpest private eye is likely to encounter little more than blind alleys, tarnished nameplates, and deserted offices.

The headquarters of Technology & Development Group and TMG Engineering were quiet over the weekend. Both companies are owned by Al-Arabi Trading, a Baghdad holding company, and, in turn, owned tool manufacturing companies that exported to Iraq.



Kuwaiti government to trace Iraqi funds. Visitors to the TDG headquarters overlooking Chiswick Green, London, are struck by its tranquility. If this really is the centre of a multi-billion pound skimming operation, there is little to show for it other than a grubby brass nameplate.

Police visited the premises in February, and questioned neighbouring tenants. An employee of The Marketing Con-

sultancy Network next door, who did not want to be named, said: "They told us that one of the TDG employees had been deported and that others were under immigration scrutiny. We have seen several people on the premises. They use the back door a lot."

The companies have maintained a low profile. For whatever reason, TDG and TMG are looking for new

offices. Tyser Greenwood, an estate agent, is seeking a new tenant for the two-storey premises. The present occupants, according to neighbours, plan to move to Slough.

In Mandeville Place, a stone's throw from fashionable Wigmore Street in the West End, two more equally tarnished nameplates hang on the wall. They carry the crests of AWA Engineering and Project Engineering International, companies that either share directors with TDG and TMG or have done in the past.

Both companies moved out in November, blaming "problems in the Gulf". The fourth floor was leased by Eurotrade, an affiliated company, in November 1989, for an annual rental of £10,000. Its directors include Roy Wicks, a board member of RWR International, an engineering consultancy, and Anees Mansour

Wadi. Mr Wadi shares a residential address with four TDG directors, including Hans P. Jon, the company secretary, and another Iraqi associate, Adnan Al-Amiri.

The list also includes Safa Al-Habibi, director general of Nassr State Enterprises, a body set up to buy arms for Iraq.

At the address in Finchley Road, north London, visitors are observed by a security camera and there are no names on the door. The flat where the directors are registered is leased by a Nigerian family who spend only part of the year in Britain.

"We have seen none of these people," said a woman dressed in traditional Arab clothing. "There have been no police here. Perhaps you should ask the porter." The porter was busy tending his boiler in the basement and would not come out.
